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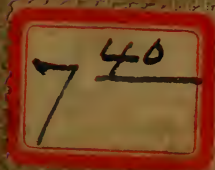
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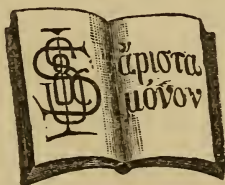
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JOHN DRYDEN'S  
PALAMON AND ARCITE.

EDITED BY  
WARREN FENNO GREGORY, A.M.,  
HARTFORD PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL.

*As sleep to weary drovers on the plain,  
As a sweet river to a thirsty swain,  
Such divine Dryden's charming verses show,  
Please like the river, like the river flow.*

POETAE BRITANNICI. 1700.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE fascinating poem here presented is one that, contrary to its deserts, has been but slightly known to the reading public. It is now very properly brought to our notice by being included in the lists for preparatory reading, and when once given to popular acquaintance ought to remain a favorite.

Dryden was an epoch-making writer, and illustrates to a marked degree the reciprocal influence of a literary man and his age. Hence it has seemed best to provide supplementary matter sufficient to give considerable knowledge of his life and work in various lines. The general unfamiliarity with Dryden in comparison with other authors of his rank has made this the more advisable.

The editor would make the usual acknowledgment of indebtedness to the scholarly researches of others, with a special expression of gratitude for the courtesy shown by the librarians of Dartmouth College.

WARREN F. GREGORY.

HARTFORD (CONN.) PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL.

*August, 1896.*



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## BRITISH POETS AND DRAMATISTS CONTEMPORARY WITH DRYDEN.

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MRS. APHRA BEHN, 1640-1689.  
SAMUEL BUTLER, 1612-1680.  
WILLIAM CONGREVE, 1670-1729.  
ABRAHAM COWLEY, 1618-1667.  
SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT, 1605-1687.  
SIR JOHN DENHAM, 1615-1669.  
(JOHN DRYDEN, 1631-1700.)  
SIR GEORGE ETHEREGE, 1635(?) - 1691.  
GEORGE FARQUHAR, 1678-1707.  
ROBERT HERRICK, 1591-1674.  
THOMAS KEN, Bishop of Bath, 1637-1710.  
NATHANIEL LEE, 1655(?) - 1692.  
COLONEL RICHARD LOVELACE, 1618-1658.  
ANDREW MARVELL, 1621-1678.  
JOHN MILTON, 1608-1674.  
CHARLES MONTAGUE, Earl of Halifax, 1661-1715.  
JOHN OLDHAM, 1653-1683.  
THOMAS OTWAY, 1651-1685.  
MATTHEW PRIOR, 1664-1721.  
THOMAS SHADWELL, 1640-1692.  
THOMAS SOUTHERNE, 1660-1746.  
THOMAS SPRAT, 1636-1713.  
SIR JOHN VANBRUGH, 1666(?) - 1726.  
HENRY VAUGHAN, 1621-1695.  
EDMUND WALLER, 1605-1687.  
JOHN WILMOT, Earl of Rochester, 1647(?) - 1680.  
GEORGE WITHER, 1588-1667.  
WILLIAM WYCHERLY, 1640-1715.

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# JOHN DRYDEN.

(1631-1700.)

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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OUR knowledge of John Dryden is very scanty, despite the number of his published works. None of his contemporaries wrote his life; and the allusions and stories that they have left are largely those arising in an unfriendly way, and little to be trusted.

He was born of good Puritan stock at the parsonage of Old-winkle All Saints, Northamptonshire, Aug. 9, 1631. His parents were Erasmus, third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden (or Driden), Baronet of Canons Ashby, and Mary Pickering Dryden, cousin of Gilbert Pickering, afterward made a councillor by Cromwell, and knighted. He received a king's scholarship at Westminster school, and was under the celebrated Dr. Busby, a teacher equally famous for his high character, scholarship, and free use of the birch, who taught and thrashed a majority of the future bishops and other leading men of the times. With him were educated Locke, the philosopher, and South, the divine and author. He early developed ability in classical translation, and left his first published effort in the shape of one of the ninety-eight elegies called out, according to the fashion of the times, upon the death of Lord Henry

Hastings, an esteemed young nobleman of high learning. This, from the very loftiness of its attempts, shows literary promise, but nothing more than that.

In 1650 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, on a Westminster scholarship. He is said to have been disciplined for insubordination towards the vice-master, and to have been involved in trouble with a nobleman's son, upon whom he probably indulged his natural disposition for satire. He obtained the degree of B.A. in 1654, but owing to the high fee required did not receive M.A. until it came in honorary form in 1668, through a dispensation of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the king's request.

The death of his father in 1654 caused him to leave to take possession of his inheritance, two-thirds of a small estate, and worth some sixty pounds a year. The other third was for the poet's mother during her life, and came to him in 1676.

Though he had not obtained a fellowship, he returned to Cambridge for three years' further study, during which time we know little of him, and have nothing from his pen save an epistle praising a volume of religious verse by his friend John Hoddesdon, and a rhymed letter, we can call it hardly more than that, to an admired cousin, Honor Driden, which she preserved with pride.

Although he studied at Cambridge nearly seven years, his writings show none of the regard for his university that we might expect from so thorough an Englishman, while he freely praises Oxford. In a prologue he says:—

“Oxford to him a dearer name shall be  
Than his own mother university;  
Thebes did his green unknowing youth engage,  
He chooses Athens in his riper age.”



This evident disloyalty has been the subject of much discussion, but it seems natural in his case. Dryden was not an affectionate man, nor one to whom a person or place would grow dear by association. Born, as we may say, for a Royalist and a Papist, he was out of place in all the surroundings of his earlier life; and Oxford, that followed King Charles and was more inclined towards Catholicism, might readily be regarded by him as more congenial, as well as the one it would pay better to praise.

After leaving Cambridge, he naturally connected himself with Sir Gilbert Pickering, probably as secretary, and in 1658 brought out his first really literary work, a eulogy on Cromwell, which shone all the more brightly by contrast with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion. It is to be noticed that this eulogy confined itself to the praise of such virtues as even opponents might allow to Cromwell, while it in no way attacked the errors or misfortunes of the royal family. This shows Dryden to have been a perfunctory, rather than an enthusiastic, Parliamentarian, and made it easier to ingratiate himself with Charles II., though Dryden's enemies afterwards reproached him with inconsistency.

It was easy for our poet to welcome the Restoration in 1660, and to celebrate the coronation next year, each by a poem in the praise of Charles. This seems a great change from eulogizing Cromwell; but we have already seen how much that signified. Then Dryden was, if anything, a Presbyterian rather than an Independent; and the Presbyterians had turned more and more away from the Protectorate. Congenial associations, too, were on the side of royalty. The Puritan party had only Marvel and Wither for poets, Milton being at this time a statesman and controversialist, rather than a writer

of verse. On the other side were Hobbes, Cowley, whom Dryden admired and followed, Herrick, Denham, and Waller, though the latter, like Dryden, had written upon Cromwell. Greater than any of these in prominent action, though an indifferent poet, was Sir William Davenant, a strong Royalist, and poet laureate. He was the author of a long poem, *Gondibert*, which Dryden liked and admired, tedious as it is.

Davenant had in a way kept the theatre alive by securing from the music-loving Cromwell permission to give entertainments, which he readily stretched into what were practically stage plays. Davenant also introduced the opera and "heroic plays," which kept the stage till near the close of the century. Dryden, who was thoroughly at home in heroic verse, embraced dramatic writing as the means for gaining fame and money. The latter he stood much in need of. Sir Gilbert's patronage had of course become worthless, he being glad to escape with his life. It is probably true, too, that Dryden had already broken with this relative, and devoted himself wholly to literature, as he seems to have been working for Herringman, the bookseller.

The theatre fully revived under the "Merry Monarch," who had become very fond of the stage during his wandering life, and wanted highly seasoned plays. The people also, in their reaction from Puritanism, felt the Elizabethan drama too slow; and there resulted a catering to popular taste to such an extent that Saintsbury declares that no play written for nearly two hundred years is worth reading, with the exception of one or two of Dryden's. This writer's first attempt, the *Wild Gallant*, was brought out in 1663. It had little success; but Dryden persevered, and was the leading dramatist of England for the next twenty years.

In the same year he married Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, and sister of Sir Robert Howard, a literary aspirant whose friendship Dryden cultivated. Much uncertain and unreliable gossip has been circulated about his marriage, but there is no reason for supposing any scandal. The marriage was not a happy one. Lady Elizabeth appears to have been none too brilliant and somewhat ill-tempered; while Dryden, though of correct private life, was not the one to discommode himself to please a wife who could not enter into his own tastes. There is a pathetic undertone in the lady's petulant wish that she were a book in order to enjoy more of her husband's society; while the poet's seizing the tempting opportunity to be witty by replying, "Then I would have you an almanac, my dear, that I might change you once a year," cannot be supposed to have conciliated her feelings. His lack of true regard and admiration for a wife who, perhaps, was little able to inspire them, may account in part for the sneers at marriage in his writings, and his relatively low portrayal of female character; but in such cases it is hard to tell which is cause and which effect. Tenderness was never an attribute of his.

During the latter half of 1665 and all of 1666, the theatres were closed on account of the plague and the fire. Upon their reopening, Samuel Pepys, whose curious diary gives us so much information, relates that he was much pleased with Dryden's play, *Secret Love or the Maiden Queen*, in which Nell Gwyn, of future notoriety, took a prominent part. Actresses had come in with the Restoration, previous to which time female parts had been taken by men. It was in one of Dryden's later plays that Nell Gwyn is said to have attracted the attention of Charles II.

In 1667 appeared his *Annus Mirabilis*, and in the same year he made his famous contract. The two theatres allowed by the government were the "King's" and the "Duke's." For the former, Dryden agreed to furnish three plays a year for a share and a quarter of the profits, out of twelve and three-quarters held by the company. This would mean between £300 and £400. Dryden wrote prolifically, and in one year, 1678, produced six complete plays, but did not keep his part of the contract, although apparently receiving his profits, as though they were glad to have his productions whenever they could get them. In 1670 Dryden was appointed royal historiographer to succeed James Howell, and also poet laureate to succeed Davenant, who had died two years before. These two offices brought a salary of £200 a year and a butt of Canary wine. To this Charles after added £100. This made Dryden the acknowledged literary leader of England; and his income from the government, the theatre, his own property, and whatever small portion his wife had, is estimated by Scott to be between £600 and £700 annually, a sum that would do more for a man than \$10,000 would to-day. But all this forms but a slight contrast to the evident fact that his life was mainly spent in narrow circumstances. The revenue from the government was irregular and uncertain in those reckless times, and the burning of the King's Theatre in 1670 greatly impaired his income from dramatic sources.

The witty burlesque of the *Rehearsal*, brought out in 1671, deserves notice. The heroic tragedies gave great opportunity for parody, and great men usually have many peculiarities. So, exactly in the nature of a modern college "grind," Villiers, the bright but debauched Duke of Buckingham, assisted by the ready Butler, author of *Hudibras*, and two lesser lights,



brought out a farce ridiculing the dramatic productions of the day in general, as well as the personal traits of their authors, Dryden receiving a large share of attention. It contained touches of malice, as might be expected, but was exceedingly well done and undeniably funny.

Dryden had now reached a position of intimacy with the great of his day, among whom was John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, a wit, and writer of bright verse, and a particular ornament of Charles II.'s court. But Rochester never wished men to get too prominent for his ready use, and was also touched by Dryden's attachment to Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, a court rival. Accordingly, Rochester transferred his patronage to one Elkanah Settle, who had produced a play of six nights' run. Through Rochester's influence, Settle's second play was brought out at Whitehall Palace by the lords and ladies of the court, and then given to the public stage, a greater honor than Dryden had received, laureate as he was. Settle's head was turned by this; and when the play was put in print, the dedication contained an attack upon Dryden. Critical references to other authors in those days partook grossly of a personal nature, and resembled nothing so much as editorials of certain sections of the far West. If Dryden could have been content to let time vindicate the excellence of his work, compared with the stuff of Settle, and have realized that by replying he would furnish the only means of perpetuating the name of a man who was to die unnoticed, and whose works would never be thought worth collecting, we should be spared the notice of an unworthy episode. But Settle was then very much alive, flattered by the court, preferred by many young men, and seemingly in a way to crowd Dryden from his place. Accordingly, the latter, assisted by Shadwell and



Crowne, two other jealous dramatists, came out with a virulent denunciation of Settle, to which the object of their attack replied with a counterblast of insult. This did Dryden little injury, save the self-degradation in deigning to contend; but the trouble with Rochester was more serious. That nobleman, having seen Settle grow large enough, elevated and then depressed Crowne; and later did the same with Otway, the only playwright of that time, save Dryden, who has left anything of account. Rochester had continued his attacks upon Dryden, who rebuked him severely in the preface of *All for Love*, his greatest play. He was also suspected of having written a severe assault upon Rochester and other courtiers, called an *Essay on Satire*, though it belonged to Lord Mulgrave, for whom Dryden merely revised it, as the poorness of the work shows. Rochester wrote that he would "leave *repartée* to black Will with a cudgel;" and Dryden was waylaid by hired roughs in December, 1679, as he was returning from his haunt at Will's coffee-house, and severely beaten. There was no doubt that Rochester was the principal; but society was so constituted that, though a reward of £50 was offered in the *London Gazette*, the perpetrators were never brought to justice, nor did Dryden appear to have public sympathy in spite of the cowardly nature of the assault.

Dryden's logical and argumentative mind, true British spirit, and fluency in verse, gained from many dramas, fitted him for the field of satire; and we next see him going from personal wrangling to political controversy. The successor to Charles II. would be the Catholic Duke of York; and his religion was obnoxious to the mass of the people, still further inflamed by belief in the pretended Popish plot of Titus Oates. The Duke of Monmouth, claiming a natural right to the throne,

had the right combination of personal attractiveness, brilliancy, and fickleness to make a temporary popular idol, and was looked to as a champion by a large element in the Protestant party. The crafty Lord Shaftesbury acted for Monmouth in the capacity of a modern political manager; and Charles II. was forced to determined action, which took the form of the banishment of Monmouth to Holland. Monmouth returned with the self-assumed title of king; and civil war, soon to be determined by the disastrous ditches at Sedgemoor, was upon the country. Matters now looked very serious. Shaftesbury was arousing every Protestant element possible, and the press of course was prominently employed. Fiery sermons were circulated; and Settle and Shadwell, with a host of small fry, were attacking the king and ministry, as well as the Duke of York, with their plays and poems, and catching the public ear. It was Dryden's place, as the representative poet of government, to meet these; and his own tastes and connections inspired him. The Duke of Ormond, Lord Halifax, and Hyde, Earl of Rochester, were his patrons, and the poets Lee and Southerne his friends, all supporters of Charles. On the other side were the Duke of Buckingham, with whom there was a score to settle for the *Rehearsal*, Shadwell, never a real friend, and now an avowed foe, and Settle, with whom Dryden had not yet done. Monmouth's beautiful duchess had patronized Dryden, to be sure, but was not much in sympathy with her husband's political schemes and allies; and Monmouth could be lightly treated, while lashing Shaftesbury as the real instigator. So, in 1681, our poet rose to the occasion with his masterly *Absalom and Achitophel*, whose success was immediate and enormous. So great a production naturally aroused a swarm of attacks in return, and the opposition was strength-

ened by the failure to overthrow Shaftesbury. He had been lodged in the Tower, and tried for high treason, but was acquitted; and his friends had struck a medal with the inscription LAETAMUR (we rejoice). Hence Dryden produced his second great satirical poem, the *Medal*, it is said at the suggestion of Charles himself. This called out another chorus of attempts to reply, each more absurd than the other in its frantic efforts to express hatred; but Dryden concerned himself with none of these until Shadwell joined their ranks. He was prominent and offensive enough to be worth a shot, and received a more thoroughly artistic literary drubbing in *Mac-Flecknoe* than any man before or since. By way of finishing matters, he then aided an alleged poet, Nahum Tate, in a second part to *Absalom and Achitophel*. Here were four great satirical poems in something more than a year; and Dryden's literary position, already lofty, was raised above all possible rivalry. He showed his versatility by following, in 1682, with *Religio Laici*.

He was now prominent, but poor. The uncertainty of his income has already been referred to; and in 1684 his salary was four years in arrears, and the expense of educating his three sons bore heavily upon him. In 1683 he sent a letter to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, stating his needs, and saying, "It is enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved Mr. Butler." The appeal seems to have been partially successful. He received some of his dues, and was appointed collector of customs for the port of London. The salary was only five pounds annually, but there were many incidental fees.

His last work for Charles II. was a *Vindication of the Duke of Guise*, done at the express command of the monarch, just before the latter's death, in 1685. Dryden hastened to honor

the departed ruler by a poem, *Threnodia Augustalis*, in which he pays a decent tribute, though he cannot forbear remarking:—

“Little was the muses’ hire, and light their gain.”

In this poem he also modestly solicits the attention of the successor. As his services richly deserved, he was retained as laureate to James II., at the same compensation, although this more frugal king retrenched somewhat by cutting off the yearly cask of wine.

In 1686 Dryden adopted Roman Catholicism. This has been much discussed by writers; and it is little wonder that such a step on the part of a man who had but lately written a poem in defence of the Anglican church, but was now in the service of a king who, as Scott says, was “all but an actual martyr for the cause of the Pope,” should be stamped by writers like Macaulay as insincere and time-serving. But the matter is not one for a hasty judgment. There is reason for regarding this act as the adoption of a fixed religious belief by a man who had hitherto been without such, rather than the abjuring of one faith for another. His *Religio Laici* does not show a firm belief in the doctrines of the Church of England, but rather a compliance with it proper for one who was the servant of his king, and who never tried to do other than please his age. It implies doubts which the firm assumption of infallibility on the part of the Romish church would more readily allay than could any other means. There need be little wonder that, having arrived at an age when he felt the need of religious stay more than when younger, and being of a temperament to adhere to monarchical power rather than democracy in the state, he should turn towards



the same kind of power in the church after his mind had taken a serious religious turn. Certain it is that he never showed any wavering after once fixing his choice, even when suffering by the Revolution, and that he trained his sons to a devotion for Rome that marked the lives of all three. This does not look like a change merely for self-advancement.

His conversion obtained substantial recognition from James II. in the shape of one hundred pounds added to his pension; and he was soon employed on the Catholic side in an answer to Stillingfleet, the leading Protestant writer. This man was no mean antagonist, and did not fail to make use of his opportunities. His stinging taunts upon the proverbial zeal of new converts, and the "changing of religion for bread," provoked Dryden to write the *Hind and the Panther*, which not only defended Catholicism, but also James's arbitrary attempts to turn the nation.

The birth of James Edward, the "Old Pretender," that event which brought the fortunes of the House of Stuart to a crisis once for all, was the occasion for *Britannia Rediviva*, whose glittering promises sadly failed of fulfilment.

The Revolution of 1688 brought a total change for our poet. His religion rendered him ineligible for office under William and Mary; and to make matters worse, the hated Shadwell was rewarded for his non-conforming loyalty under James II., by being given the royal posts vacated by his great opponent, and at once proceeded to exult in coarse strains over his triumph.

Dryden was now reduced to dependence upon his small patrimony and the uncertain earnings of his craft. He renewed his dramatic writings, and placed five more pieces upon the



stage; and had to endure the humiliation of gratifying his enemies by a failure with his last production. With this unfortunate conclusion to a great dramatic career, his connection with the stage ceased in 1692.

Dryden had indeed had great reverses, but his primacy in letters was neither destroyed nor long interrupted. William III. did not remain popular; and the various elements in the nation soon drew back from the general enthusiasm to the avowed maintenance of former party and sectarian principles, so that the Catholic adherents were not long conspicuous in being the hated few who stood out against the new order of things. Dryden regained and held through life his supremacy at Will's, and was literary dictator as Ben Jonson had been before him, and as Addison and Samuel Johnson were afterwards. Ward, in the *London Spy*, speaks of a pinch of snuff from Dryden's box as being equivalent to a degree in that academy of wit. Southerne remained devotedly attached to him; and "the great Mr. Congreve," as Thackeray calls him, was especially in his intimacy. Others who courted him were John Dennis, the rising young Mr. Addison, Vanbrugh, Granville, and Moyle. Pope, then a boy of twelve, contrived to see him in 1700. Swift, though Dryden's cousin, was not his friend. The story goes that Swift, with a wrong conception of his own powers, had written some odes, as he thought them, which he submitted to his great kinsman. The verdict was, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." For this concise bit of truth, Swift assailed his critic here and there through his writings, and remains the only author whose works are much read to-day that has tried to dim the poetical fame of Dryden.

Dryden's literary work now took the form of translations

and imitations. The prefaces to these translations contain very valuable prose in the way of essays upon literary subjects. It is said that, when a poet writes prose to any extent, he usually writes the best quality. It was surely so here; and Dryden, without giving much prominence to his prose writings, perhaps did more for the language by enriching the vocabulary, teaching good expressions, and establishing a straightforward, lucid prose style, than in any other way.

He long intended to write an epic based upon either the Arthurian tales or the deeds of the Black Prince. He thought that an epic must introduce supernatural agency, and conceived the idea of guardian angels of kingdoms contending each for his own charge. It is no doubt as well that he never carried this design into execution. We may suppose with Dr. Johnson that the work would have contained many excellences, but it would have been uneven. More than this, his whole work shows a capacity for adapting and building upon the work of others, rather than of extended original conception. Had he been the man to write a great epic, he would have written one.

In 1694 he began his greatest task, a translation of Vergil, encouraged by the bookseller, Tauson, who had profited from the *Miscellanies*. The author and his publisher quarrelled bitterly over the terms for this; but common interest held them together, so that it was presented in 1697. Dr. Johnson remarks that the nation seemed to consider its honor interested in the rendering of its favorite classical poet by the greatest of its living writers. The author's profits, twelve hundred pounds or more, were small in comparison with the six thousand at least which Pope gained from his *Iliad*, but great for the age of Dryden. His work was cultivating a taste that Pope

reaped the benefit of, and no one realized this better than Pope himself.

In the preface to his last work, the *Fables*, he again had occasion to reply to bitter critics. A pedantic clergyman, named Milbourne, jealous for a translation of his own, assailed his Vergil; and Sir Richard Blackmore, a physician, well-meaning, but severe and narrow, had taken upon himself the task of redeeming poetry from the licentious language of such men as Dryden, Congreve, and Wycherly. These were summarily lashed by Dryden's pen; but there were strong grounds for criticism upon the poetry of the period, if given by a better man than Blackmore. Such a one was the great Jeremy Collier, who published, in 1698, "*A Short View of the Immorality and Profuneness of the Stage*." This was unfair in some of its illustrations, but contained so much well-expressed truth that it left a wholesome influence upon dramatic poetry. It shows the greatness of Dryden that he replied to this in a very different vein from his scathing remarks upon other critics. He acknowledged in a manly way the justice of many of the strictures, only protesting with reason against Collier's strained interpretation at times, and remarking, "If the zeal for God's house had not eaten him up, it had at least consumed some part of his good manners and civility." Collier seems in his turn to have accepted Dryden's statement in a manly way, and to have directed his later efforts mainly against Congreve, who well deserved a sermon.

The environment of controversy, amid which so much of Dryden's life had been passed, followed him to its very close. Vanbrugh, the playwright, had revised Fletcher's comedy of the *Pilgrim*; and Dryden within twenty days of his death contributed the prologue and epilogue, in the former of which he

once more paid his withering respects to Blackmore, and in the latter referred to Collier, though more courteously and without personal attack.

Dryden had long suffered from chronic complaints, but the end came suddenly. An injury to his foot became gangrened from the presence of erysipelas; and the stanch old Englishman resisted amputation, saying that he did not care to part with one leg at such an age to preserve an uncomfortable life with what remained. The end came May 1, 1700. He was honored with a public funeral by subscription; and after his remains had lain in state until twelve days after his decease, they were placed in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, between Chaucer and Cowley. His grave was unmarked until 1714, when Pope's allusion to the "rude and nameless stone" stung his old friend Lord Mulgrave, now Duke of Buckinghamshire, to give him a simple monument, upon which a bust was placed. Mulgrave's Duchess, thirty years later, replaced this bust by a better one.

Dryden's wife, the Lady Elizabeth, died insane in 1714. His three sons, Charles, born in 1666, John, 1668, and Erasmus Henry, 1669, young men of some literary aspirations and devout Catholics, had all previously died unmarried. The Dryden family is now extinct.

Dryden is described as being thoroughly English in person, as well as manner. He was of fair complexion, full face, handsome figure in youth, though not tall, and very stout in his later years. He delighted in fishing, in which he was expert, and bowling. He was fond of scientific research, and took great interest in the philosophical awakening of his time, which was stimulated by Newton and Boyle. He was a firm believer in astrology, in which he was skilled, and many things



in his writings betray this. Dryden was essentially a domestic man of very regular habits. He seems to have passed his mornings in study, and to have regularly repaired after dinner to Will's, where tradition relates that he had his "winter" chair by the fire, and his "summer" chair on the balcony. He was an indulgent father and a kind landlord. Congreve describes him as the most modest and unassuming of men, and hence liable to be wrongly judged by those who found it hard to know him save by his writings. This goes to prove that he felt the license of his plays necessary to meet the demands of his age, and that Johnson was right in regarding indelicacy as "his trade, not his pleasure." The recognizing and following of popular taste can easily become other than a merit; but it marks the true journalistic mind, which was Dryden's, and at another period he would have written very differently. In our own time we can conceive of his occupying such a position as Charles A. Dana, with his ability for polemic writing and leadership in diction, but with the literary side more emphasized, as in the case of Bryant. He has left much that will stand the test of any age, but his whole work must not be judged save in connection with the ferments in which his lot was cast.

No better words can be applied to a study of Dryden than his own where he says, as aptly quoted by Addison:—

"Errors and straws upon the surface flow;  
Who seeks for pearls must dive below."

There are abundant pearls in Dryden's lines; and to those who are willing to discover them, and to recognize all that is commendable in his sturdy, industrious life, he will remain "Glorious John."

## LITERARY PRODUCTIONS OF JOHN DRYDEN.

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DRAMATIC WORKS. Twenty-seven in number, consisting of twelve tragedies, nine comedies, three tragi-comedies, and three operas, part of which were presented at the King's Theatre, part at the Duke's, and part by the united companies. The earlier tragedies were written in rhymed iambic pentameter, or heroic metre, an imitation of French plays, blank verse being impossible in the French language. Later Dryden changed to blank verse in his tragedies. His plays have many features of the Spanish in the way of rapid action, profusion of intrigue, and extravagance of language. They also contain many lyric passages after the Italian style, thus showing a mixed dramatic school, that prevailed until Garrick revived Shakespeare. *All for Love*, the only play, as Dryden says, that he wrote to please himself, is by far the best, and has genuine strength. *Don Sebastian* and *The Spanish Friar* are also praised by editors of Dryden. There are many bright things in nearly all these plays, and the melody of many of the songs scattered through them is exquisite; but unfortunately the coarseness which they share with the plays in general prevents their being used. Written, as they were, distinctly for their age, Dryden's plays as a whole have nothing to commend them to others than special students of dramatic progress. There is no call for an extended review here, as, had

Dryden's fame depended on the drama to which he gave so much of his life, he would be rated to-day as a third-rate author.

HEROIC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL (1658). A vigorous but crude eulogy. At the same time Saintsbury says that not three poets then living could have written its best lines.

ASTRÆA REDUX (*The Return of Glory*) (1660). In honor of the Restoration. This, while uneven, shows a master's use of the heroic couplet, and has touches of the "energy divine" with which Pope credited Dryden.

A PANEGYRIC UPON THE CORONATION (1661). A poem in heroic couplets like the preceding. Abundant in its flattery, as might be expected. It shows a gain in ease of writing, and a beginning of the analysis of human nature that marked his later writings.

ANNUS MIRABILIS (*The Year of Wonders*) (1667). A laudatory poem of three hundred and four stanzas describing the events and achievements of the year 1666. The first part treats of the Dutch wars, the last of the fire in London. Written, like the eulogy on Cromwell, in quatrains, after the style of Sir William Davenant, and Dryden's last use of this metre. The leading effort of his first poetical period.

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL (1681). A satirical poem defending Charles II. against the Whig party upon the occasion of Monmouth's rebellion. The characters are drawn from the scriptural account of Absalom's insurrection against King David, 2 Sam. xiii.-xviii. Monmouth is *Absalom*; Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, the real instigator of the uprising, is *Achitophel*, or *Ahithophel*; while Charles is of course *David*. The scriptural parallel, admirably adapted for the pur-



pose, even if Charles did scant credit to his prototype, is sustained in the reference to minor persons, as well as places, parties, and sects, by the aid of Biblical characters not necessarily contemporary with Absalom. Thus, Queen Catherine is *Michal*, the Duke of Buckingham is the wicked *Zimri*, the Duke of Ormond is the good *Barzillai*, France is *Egypt*, the Roman Catholics are *Jebusites*, etc. Popular interest was heightened by the effort to establish the identity of those alluded to, and the names used clung as nicknames. It forms the ablest poem of its kind in existence, and selections from it live as classics.

THE MEDAL (1682). For the circumstances of this, see *Biographical Sketch*. The personal satire in this is directed at Shaftesbury; but it incidentally traces the troubles of the country from the civil war through the stages of religious control and contention, a transient republic, and a military tyranny to the Restoration. Naturally of less general interest than the previous poem on account of its narrower scope, but its equal in withering power.

MAC-FLECKNOE (1682). A coarse, keen, mock-heroic poem directed at Thomas Shadwell, and in the form of an imaginary story in which Shadwell is made to take a prominent and mortifyingly ludicrous part. There had been an absurd Irish would-be poet named Flecknoe. Dryden represents him as absolute ruler of the realms of Nonsense, and as choosing Shadwell for his successor on the ground that Shadwell is the only one of his sons who is without sense at all times. The poem describes the coronation, and formed the model for Pope's *Dunciad*.

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL. PART II. (1682). A continuation of the attack upon the Whigs, and introducing Dryden's

rivals, Shadwell and Settle, under the names of *Og* and *Doeg*. Written mainly by Nahum Tate with Dryden's revision, and two hundred lines of the latter's own, in which some most telling satirical work is done, as seen in such passages as:—

“Doeg, though without knowing how or why,  
Made still a blundering kind of melody.”

RELIGIO LAICI (*A Layman's Faith*) (1682). An argument for the Church of England, but no less political than religious, inasmuch as sectarian controversy had a great deal to do with the party politics of Charles II.'s time. It was evidently designed to point a proper middle course for the Anglican church, between the Catholics on the one hand, and the Dissenters on the other, who were assailing both the Established Church and each other, and thus strengthen the king. The arguments are maintained with rare skill, and show Dryden's logical, clear-cut mind at its best. The name is copied from Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*. While not sublime as a poem, because the verse is but the vehicle for the argument, the use of the heroic couplet approaches more nearly the smoothness of Pope than much of his previous work.

ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY (revised in 1684, first published in 1668). The first regular treatise in our language on the art of writing, and a valuable contribution to prose development. The object was to free the honor of the English poets from the censure of their accusers. This and subsequent writings caused Johnson to style Dryden the “father of English criticism.” The subject is treated in the form of a supposed dialogue, under fictitious names, between Dryden himself and three scholarly friends.

LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER (1685). A translation from

the French of Bouhours, to show Dryden's zeal for his new faith, and dedicated to Queen Mary of Este, wife of James II.

THRENODIA AUGUSTALIS (*Elegy for an August Prince*) (1685). An honorary ode following the death of Charles II. Written in Pindaric measure, which with its studied irregularity seems forced and unnatural in our language. A shrewd poetic expression of "The king is dead, long live the king!"

THE HIND AND THE PANTHER (1687). An allegorical poem to decide the controversy between Romanists and Protestants in favor of the former, whose faith Dryden had adopted. The *Hind* is the Church of Rome, milk-white and innocent; the *Panther* is the Church of England, spotted and cruel. Other denominations, classes, and individuals are denoted by the names of various beasts and birds. It is in three parts, the first of which aims at being lofty, while the second and third are designed for conversation and dispute. It shows the full power of Dryden and greater care than he usually gave to his work, but can be of little interest to us now; and in its own time the absurdity of making beasts discuss theology rendered it a fair mark for the ridicule it received in *The Town and the Country Mouse*, by Montague and Matthew Prior.

FIRST ODE FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY (1687). Written for a musical society in London which began in 1683 to hold annual celebrations on St. Cecilia's Day, the twenty-second of November. This ode is only sixty-three lines in length, and is "lost in the splendour of the second," but is remarkable for the number of quotations it has supplied.

MISCELLANIES (1684, 1685, 1693, 1694). Collections comprising many translations and pieces of general work by Dryden and other authors. The later ones had a number of

satires from *Juvenal*, all of *Persius*, much from *Ovid*, and a little from *Homer*.

TRANSLATION OF VERGIL (1697). Dryden's most extended task, and famous in its time. Though he rarely reproduced the grace of classical writers, he caught their fire; and his scholarship and practised command of verse made him a fluent and usually accurate translator.

FABLES (1697). A collection of adaptations from Chaucer and Bocaccio, the best of which is *Palamon and Arcite*, besides other work, among which is a celebrated epistle to a cousin, Sir John Driden, and also his peerless *Second Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*. This is not only the particular star of all Dryden's work, but one of the noblest pieces of verse in our tongue, and should be read by every student.

Besides these principal works, Dryden left many epistles, translations, and prefaces and prologues for the plays of others as well as for his own. His prefaces contain much excellent prose, which had a great influence in making for a higher standard of criticism and a vigorous prose style.

## THE POETRY OF JOHN DRYDEN.

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“In a general survey of Dryden’s labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of Dryden’s works it was said by Pope that he could select from them better specimens of every sort of poetry than any other English writer could supply. Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models.”

JOHNSON.

“Educated in a pedantic taste and a fanatical religion, John Dryden was destined, if not to give laws to the stage of England, at least to defend its liberties; to improve burlesque into satire; to free translation from the fetters of verbal metaphor, and exclude from it the license of paraphrase; to teach posterity the powerful and varied poetical harmony of which their language was capable; to give an example of the lyric ode of unapproached excellence, and to leave to English literature a name, second only to those of Milton and Shakespeare.”

SCOTT.



"It is allowed that even of the few who were his superiors in genius, none has exercised a more extensive or permanent influence on the national habits of thought and expression."

MACAULAY.

"Here you see the regular habits of an honorable and well-to-do family, the discipline of a connected and solid education, the taste for classical and exact studies. Such circumstances announce and prepare, not an artist, but a man of letters."

TAINÉ.

"Dryden's peculiar gift, in which no poet of any language has surpassed him, is the faculty of treating any subject which he does treat poetically. His range is enormous, and wherever it is deficient, it is possible to see that external circumstances had to do with the limitation."

SAINTSBURY.

"Grace and lightness were with him much more a laborious achievement than a natural gift, and it is all the more remarkable that he should so often have attained to what seems such an easy perfection in both. He was not wholly and unconsciously a poet, but a thinker who sometimes lost himself on enchanted ground, and was transfigured by its touch."

LOWELL.

These six scholarly estimates give the basis for a composite impression which can hardly fail to be just and comprehensive. We see Dryden great in scholarship, vigor, and fluency; and at the same time hampered as a poet by the very qualifications that made him masterly as a critic and controversialist. Macaulay has shown in his essay on Milton how mental training and acquirements are ordinarily a hindrance to the imaginative frenzy of poetic genius; and Taine, in commenting

on the religious, political, and personal strife in which Dryden was so much engaged, has sagely remarked that it is a long way from this combative and argumentative existence to the seclusion of the true poet. Add to all this the fact that Dryden wrote for a living, and was thus essentially the servant of his age, or, as he said, "He who lives to please must please to live," and the great unevenness which appears to so marked a degree as to make the reader feel at times that Dryden was a dual personage is accounted for.

Dryden was the first of a new school of poets, which left behind the natural poetry of the Elizabethan Age, with its expression of the passions, and the fanciful imaginings of the poets called "metaphysical," and passed on to the colder discussion of men's mental faculties and their social and political relations. The natural result was sententious verse, which brought with it exact mechanical forms; and the rhymed couplet suited its purpose. Dryden used this with power and richness. He never brought it to the polished nicety of Pope; he is liable to end with weak syllables, or introduce a third rhyming line that often seems superfluous, and pains the reader with the use of *did* and kindred auxiliaries to fill his metre, a practice supposed to belong to a poor order of writers. His violation of the perfected heroic couplet by the closing of a sentence within a line does not, however, seem a fault to us now. His lack of revision is responsible for many ugly places, but became an excellence as well as a demerit; for while, if he failed at the first cast, his lines are indifferent or even wretched, when he made a happy turn it was the touch of genius, and shone the brighter for betraying no mark of the file. Hence there is many a line or even passage that the painstaking art of Pope is unequal to; and Scott praises his

“brave negligence;” while Johnson sees in Dryden’s verse, as compared with Pope’s, the superior charm which a diversified glade may have for the eye wearied with the smoothness of a well-trimmed lawn.

His faults must not be passed over in an impartial criticism; and while great allowance can be made for circumstances, there are defects other than crudeness of form that must be deplored. Chief among these is his unsympathetic treatment of the passions and emotions. Love becomes sensual with him, and his delineation of woman’s character suffers in this way. His lack of tenderness is too great to be atoned for by his strength; but it is impossible not to admire the manly vigor of which he was capable, and which at times reaches the sublime. A collection of gems, showing original power of thought joined to felicity of expression, might be made from Dryden’s works, that with equivalent value could be excelled in number by no other poet save Shakespeare. It was the recognition of such beauties as these that made Gray impatient of criticism upon Dryden, and loath to notice his faults. A crowning honor to Dryden’s verse is found in the oft-quoted tribute of his great disciple, Pope:—

“Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.”



## INTRODUCTION TO PALAMON AND ARCITE.

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THE materials for this story are of great antiquity, going back to early minstrelsy in praise of Theseus, the national hero of Athens. The story of Theseus was a favorite during the Middle Ages, from the suggestions of knight-errantry with which it teems; and the tale of Palamon and Arcite seems to have been joined at some early date to the narrative of the siege of Thebes.

The poem here given is a modernization of the *Knight's Tale* of Chaucer, which, with two others of the *Canterbury Tales*, Dryden reproduced in verse of his own, as the early English of Chaucer had become largely unintelligible. Chaucer in turn appears to have drawn his materials from an epic poem, *Teseide*, by Boccaccio, besides being greatly indebted for descriptions to the *Thebaid* of Statius; but his work was so much more than a translation that it is fairly called his own. As Chaucer has been the object of so much study in recent years, and we now have his works so edited as to cause us little trouble in reading, it follows that *Palamon and Arcite* is much less known than the *Knight's Tale*, though it richly deserves our attention for merits of its own. The form given by Dryden is somewhat longer than the earlier poem, the space left by omissions being more than filled by his additions. These extended descriptions often heighten the effect of the



original, and leave a smooth, harmonious whole for the reader. In places, however, he clearly falls below the simple picturesqueness of Chaucer, but it would be out of place here to enter largely into a comparison of the two poems. It is for us to deal with the excellences of the animated version Dryden has given us.

The tale is one of jealous rivalry, but true manliness withal, and rises to the height of classic epics in the manner in which the gods become involved. In causing Venus to gain her point ultimately, though Mars is gratified, is told anew the old story of triumphant love. It is impossible for such a recital to be other than extravagant and highly sentimental, but it has a pervading spirit that redeems it from the unpleasant effect that these features would have if unrelieved. It would be ill-judged to continue the criticism of Dr. Johnson that the events of the poem are improbable and anachronistic, as the same objection would hold against a great body of our admired romantic literature. We do not less admire the *Idylls of the King*, because chivalry was unknown in Arthur's time.

Dryden himself says, "I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of *Palamon and Arcite*, which is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the *Ilias* or the *Æneis*."

The value of the study of this poem should be not only that arising from its appreciation when taken by itself, but also from its being a means of understanding the literary tastes and tendencies of a remote time. Then, if the same method be followed with representative productions of later writers, comparisons can be drawn which will give a true idea of literary development in our language.

## DEDICATION OF PALAMON AND ARCITE.

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TO HER GRACE

*THE DUCHESS OF ORMOND,*

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM OF PALAMON AND ARCITE.

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MADAM,

THE bard who first adorned our native tongue,  
Tuned to his British lyre this ancient song :  
Which Homer might without a blush rehearse,  
And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verse :  
He matched their beauties, where they most excel ;      5  
Of love sung better, and of arms as well.

Vouchsafe, illustrious Ormond, to behold  
What power the charms of beauty had of old ;  
Nor wonder if such deeds of arms were done,  
Inspired by two fair eyes, that sparkled like your own. 10

If Chaucer by the best idea wrought,  
And poets can divine each other's thought,  
The fairest nymph before his eyes he set ;  
And then the fairest was Plantagenet ;  
Who three contending princes made her prize,      15  
And ruled the rival nations with her eyes :

Who left immortal trophies of her fame  
And to the noblest order gave the name.

Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,  
You keep her conquests, and extend your own :  
As when the stars, in their ethereal race, 5  
At length have roll'd around the liquid space,  
At certain periods they resume their place,  
From the same point of heaven their course advance,  
And move in measures of their former dance ;  
Thus, after length of ages, she returns, 10  
Restor'd in you, and the same place adorns ;  
Or you perform her office in the sphere,  
Born of her blood, and make a new Platonic year.  
O true Plantagenet, O race divine,  
(For beauty still is fatal to the line) 15  
Had Chaucer liv'd that angel face to view,  
Sure he had drawn his Emily from you ;  
Or had you liv'd to judge the doubtful right,  
Your noble Palamon had been the knight ;  
And conquering Theseus from his side had sent 20  
Your generous lord, to guide the Theban government.  
Time shall accomplish that ; and I shall see  
A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.  
Already have the fates your path prepar'd,  
And sure presage your future sway declar'd : 25  
When westward, like the sun, you took your way,  
And from benighted Britain bore the day,  
Blue Triton gave the signal from the shore,  
The ready Nereids heard, and swam before

To smoothe the seas; a soft Etesian gale  
But just inspir'd, and gently swell'd the sail;  
Portunus took his turn whose ample hand  
Heav'd up his lighten'd keel and sunk the sand,  
And steer'd the sacred vessel safe to land. 5  
The land, if not restrain'd, had met your way,  
Projected out a neck, and jutt'd to the sea.  
Hibernia, prostrate at your feet, ador'd,  
In you, the pledge of her expected lord;  
Due to her isle; a venerable name; 10  
His father and his grandsire known to fame;  
Aw'd by that house, accustom'd to command,  
The sturdy kerns in due subjection stand;  
Nor bear the reins in any foreign hand.  
At your approach, they crowded to the port; 15  
And scarcely landed, you create a court:  
As Ormond's harbinger, to you they run;  
For Venus is the promise of the sun.  
The waste of civil wars, their towns destroy'd,  
Pales unhonor'd, Ceres unemploy'd, 20  
Were all forgot; and one triumphant day  
Wip'd all the tears of three campaigns away.  
Blood, rapines, massacres, were cheaply bought,  
So mighty recompense your beauty brought.  
As when the dove returning bore the mark 25  
Of earth restor'd to the long-lab'ring ark,  
The relics of mankind, secure of rest,  
Oped every window to receive the guest,  
And the fair bearer of the message bless'd;



So, when you came, with loud repeated cries,  
The nation took an omen from your eyes,  
And God advanc'd his rainbow in the skies,  
To sign inviolable peace restor'd ;  
The saints, with solemn shouts, proclaim'd the new  
accord.

5

When at your second coming you appear,  
(For I foretell that millenary year)  
The sharpen'd share shall vex the soil no more,  
But earth unbidden shall produce her store ;  
The land shall laugh, the circling ocean smile,  
And heaven's indulgence bless the holy isle.  
Heaven from all ages has reserv'd for you  
That happy clime, which venom never knew ;  
Or if it had been there, your eyes alone  
Have power to chase all poison but their own.

10

15

Now in this interval, which fate has cast  
Betwixt your future glories and your past,  
This pause of power, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn ;  
While England celebrates your safe return,  
By which you seem the season to command,  
And bring our summers back to their forsaken land.

20

The vanquish'd isle our leisure must attend,  
Till the fair blessing we vouchsafe to send ;  
Nor can we spare you long, tho' often we may lend.  
The dove was twice employ'd abroad, before  
The world was dried and she return'd no more.

25

Nor dare we trust so soft a messenger,  
New from her sickness, to that northern air ;



Rest here awhile your lustre to restore,  
That they may see you as you shone before ;  
For yet, the eclipse not wholly past, you wade  
Through some remains, and dimness of a shade.

A subject in his prince may claim a right, 5  
Nor suffer him with strength impair'd to fight ;  
Till force returns, his ardor we restrain,  
And curb his warlike wish to cross the main.

Now past the danger, let the learn'd begin  
The inquiry, where disease could enter in ; 10  
How those malignant atoms forc'd their way,  
What in the faultless frame they found to make their  
prey ?

Where every element was weigh'd so well,  
That heaven alone, who mix'd the mass, could tell  
Which of the four ingredients could rebel ; 15  
And where, imprison'd in so sweet a cage,  
A soul might well be pleas'd to pass an age.

And yet the fine materials made it weak :  
Porcelain, by being pure, is apt to break :  
E'en to your breast the sickness durst aspire ; 20  
And, forc'd from that fair temple to retire,  
Profanely set the holy place on fire.

In vain your lord, like young Vespasian, mourn'd,  
When the fierce flames the sanctuary burn'd :  
And I prepar'd to pay in verses rude 25  
A most detested act of gratitude :  
E'en this had been your elegy, which now  
Is offer'd for your health, the table of my vow.

Your angel sure our Morley's mind inspir'd,  
To find the remedy your ill required.  
As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,  
Was taught to dream a herb for Ptolemee :  
Or Heaven, which had such over-cost bestow'd 5  
As scarce it could afford to flesh and blood,  
So lik'd the frame, he would not work anew,  
To save the charges of another you.  
Or by his middle science did he steer,  
And saw some great contingent good appear 10  
Well worth a miracle to keep you here :  
And for that end, preserved the precious mould,  
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold :  
And meditated in his better mind  
An heir from you, which may redeem the failing kind. 15  
Bless'd be the power which has at once restored  
The hopes of lost succession to your lord ;  
Joy to the first and last of each degree,  
Virtue to courts, and, what I long'd to see,  
To you the Graces, and the Muse to me. 20  
Oh, daughter of the rose ! whose cheeks unite  
The differing titles of the red and white ;  
Who heaven's alternate beauty well display,  
The blush of morning, and the milky way ;  
Whose face is paradise, but fenced from sin ; 25  
For God in either eye has placed a cherubin.  
All is your lord's alone ; even absent he  
Employs the care of chaste Penelope.  
For him you waste in tears your widow'd hours,

For him your curious needle paints the flowers ;  
Such works of old imperial dames were taught ;  
Such, for Ascanius, fair Elissa wrought.  
The soft recesses of your hours improve  
The three fair pledges of your happy love ;  
All other parts of pious duty done,  
You owe your Ormond nothing but a son ;  
To fill in future times his father's place,  
And wear the garter of his mother's race.



# PALAMON AND ARCITE;

OR, THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

---

## BOOK I.

IN days of old, there lived, of mighty fame,  
A valiant prince, and Theseus was his name :  
A chief who more in feats of arms excelled,  
The rising nor the setting sun beheld.  
Of Athens he was lord ; much land he won, 5  
And added foreign countries to his crown.  
In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,  
Whom first by force he conquered, then by love ;  
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,  
With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came. 10  
With honor to his home let Theseus ride,  
With Love to friend, and Fortune for his guide,  
And his victorious army at his side.  
I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,  
Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way : 15  
But, were it not too long, I would recite  
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight  
Betwixt the hardy queen and hero knight ;



The town besieged, and how much blood it cost  
The female army, and the Athenian host ;  
The spousals of Hippolita the queen ;  
What tilts and tourneys at the feast were seen ;  
The storm at their return, the ladies' fear : 5  
But these, and other things, I must forbear.  
The field is spacious I design to sow,  
With oxen far unfit to draw the plough.  
The remnant of my tale is of a length  
To tire your patience, and to waste my strength ; 10  
And trivial accidents shall be forborne,  
That others may have time to take their turn ;  
As was at first enjoined us by mine host :  
That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,  
Should win his supper at our common cost. 15

And, therefore where I left, I will pursue  
This ancient story, whether false or true,  
In hope it may be mended with a new.  
The prince I mentioned, full of high renown,  
In this array drew near the Athenian town ; 20  
When in his pomp and utmost of his pride,  
Marching, he chanced to cast his eye aside,  
And saw a quire of mourning dames, who lay  
By two and two across the common way :  
At his approach they raised a rueful cry, 25  
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,  
Creeping and crying, till they seized at last  
His courser's bridle, and his feet embraced.

“ Tell me,” said Theseus, “ what and whence you are,

And why this funeral pageant you prepare ?  
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,  
To meet my triumph in ill-omened weeds ?  
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy  
With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy ? 5  
Or are you injured, and demand relief ?  
Name your request, and I will ease your grief."

The most in years of all the mourning train  
Began (but swoonèd first away for pain) ;  
Then scarce recovered spoke. " Nor envy we 10  
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory ;  
'Tis thine, O king, the afflicted to redress,  
And fame has filled the world with thy success :  
We wretched women sue for that alone,  
Which of thy goodness is refused to none ; 15  
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,  
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief :  
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,  
But held the rank of sovereign queen before ;  
Till thanks to giddy Chance, which never bears 20  
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,  
She cast us headlong from our high estate,  
And here in hope of thy return we wait :  
And long have waited in the temple nigh,  
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency. 25  
But reverence thou the power whose name it bears,  
Relieve the oppressed, and wipe the widow's tears.  
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,  
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen :

At Thebes he fell ; cursed be the fatal day !  
And all the rest thou seest in this array  
To make their moan, their lords in battle lost  
Before that town besieged by our confederate host :  
But Creon, old and impious, who commands 5  
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,  
Denies the rites of funeral fires to those  
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.  
Unburned, unburied, on a heap they lie ;  
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny ; 10  
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,  
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed.”

At this she shrieked aloud ; the mournful train  
Echoed her grief, and, grovelling on the plain,  
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind, 15  
Besought his pity to their helpless kind.

The prince was touched, his tears began to flow,  
And, as his tender heart would break in two,  
He sighed ; and could not but their fate deplore,  
So wretched now, so fortunate before. 20  
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,  
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,  
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,  
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,  
And whate’er else to chivalry belongs, 25  
He would not cease, till he revenged their wrongs :  
That Greece should see performed what he declared ;  
And cruel Creon find his just reward.  
He said no more, but, shunning all delay,

Rode on; nor entered Athens on his way :  
But left his sister and his queen behind,  
And waved his royal banner in the wind :  
Where in an argent field the god of war  
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car; 5  
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,  
And all the godhead seemed to glow with fire ;  
E'en the ground glitter'd where the standard flew,  
And the green grass was dyed to sanguine hue,  
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore 10  
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaure :  
The soldiers shout around with generous rage,  
And in that victory their own presage.  
He prais'd their ardor ; inly pleased to see  
His host the flower of Grecian chivalry. 15  
All day he march'd, and all the ensuing night,  
And saw the city with returning light.  
The process of the war I need not tell,  
How Theseus conquer'd, and how Creon fell :  
Or after, how by storm the walls were won, 20  
Or how the victor sack'd and burn'd the town :  
How to the ladies he restor'd again  
The bodies of their lords in battle slain :  
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd,  
All these to fitter times shall be deferr'd : 25  
I spare the widows' tears, their woful cries,  
And howling at their husbands' obsequies ;  
How Theseus at these funerals did assist,  
And with what gifts the mourning dames dismiss'd.



Thus when the victor chief had Creon slain,  
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain  
His mighty camp, and, when the day return'd,  
The country wasted, and the hamlets burn'd,  
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred, 5  
Without control to strip and spoil the dead.

There, in a heap of slain, among the rest  
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load op-  
press'd  
Of slaughter'd foes, whom first to death they sent,  
The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument. 10  
Both fair, and both of royal blood they seem'd,  
Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deem'd ;  
That day in equal arms they fought for fame ;  
Their swords, their shields, their surcoats were the same.  
Close by each other laid, they press'd the ground, 15  
Their manly bosoms pierc'd with many a grisly wound ;  
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,  
But some faint signs of feeble life appear ;  
The wand'ring breath was on the wing to part,  
Weak was the pulse, and hardly heav'd the heart. 20  
These two were sisters' sons ; and Arcite one  
Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.  
From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,  
And softly both convey'd to Theseus' tent ;  
Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care, 25  
He to his city sent as prisoners of the war,  
Hopeless of ransom, and condemn'd to lie  
In durance doom'd a ling'ring death to die.



This done, he march'd away with warlike sound,  
And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,  
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more  
renown'd.

But in a tower, and never to be loos'd,  
The woful captive kinsmen are inclos'd : 5

Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,  
Till once, 'twas on the morn of cheerful May,  
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen  
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,  
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new, 10  
For with the rosy color strove her hue,  
Waked, as her custom was, before the day,  
To do the observance due to sprightly May :  
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep  
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep ;  
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves ; 16  
Inspires new flames, revives extinguish'd loves.

In this remembrance Emily ere day  
Arose, and dress'd herself in rich array ;  
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair : 20  
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair :  
A riband did the braided tresses bind,  
The rest was loose, and wanton'd in the wind :  
Aurora had but newly chased the night,  
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light, 25  
When to the garden-walk she took her way,  
To sport and trip along in cool of day,  
And offer maiden vows in honor of the May.

At every turn, she made a little stand,  
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand  
To draw the rose, and every rose she drew  
She shook the stalk, and brushed away the dew ;  
Then party-colored flowers of white and red 5  
She wove, to make a garland for her head :  
This done, she sung and carolled out so clear,  
That men and angels might rejoice to hear :  
Even wondering Philomel forgot to sing ;  
And learned from her to welcome in the spring. 10  
The tower, of which before was mention made,  
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,  
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,  
Was one partition of the palace wall ;  
The garden was inclosed within the square, 15  
Where young Emilia took the morning air.

It happened Palamon, the prisoner knight,  
Restless of woe, arose before the light,  
And with his jailor's leave desired to breathe  
An air more wholèsome than the damps beneath. 20  
This granted, to the tower he took his way,  
Cheered with the promise of a glorious day :  
Then cast a languishing regard around,  
And saw, with hateful eyes, the temples crowned  
With golden spires, and all the hostile ground. 25  
He sighed, and turned his eyes, because he knew  
'Twas but a larger jail he had in view :  
Then looked below, and from the castle's height  
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight :

The garden, which before he had not seen  
In spring's new livery clad of white and green,  
Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks between.

This viewed, but not enjoyed, with arms across  
He stood, reflecting on his country's loss ; 5  
Himself an object of the public scorn,  
And often wished he never had been born.  
At last, for so his destiny required,  
With walking giddy, and with thinking tired,  
He through a little window cast his sight, 10  
Though thick of bars, that gave a scanty light :  
But ev'n that glimmering served him to descry  
The inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but seized with sudden smart,  
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart ; 15  
Struck blind with overpowering light he stood,  
Then started back amazed, and cried aloud.

Young Arcite heard ; and up he ran with haste,  
To help his friend, and in his arms embraced ;  
And ask'd him why he look'd so deadly wan, 20  
And whence and how his change of cheer began ?  
Or who had done the offence ? " But if," said he,  
" Your grief alone is hard captivity ;  
For love of heaven with patience undergo  
A cureless ill, since fate will have it so ; 25  
So stood our horoscope in chains to lie,  
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,  
Or other baleful aspect, ruled our birth

When all the friendly stars were under earth :  
Whate'er betides, by destiny 'tis done ;  
And better bear like men than seek to shun."

"Nor of my bonds," said Palamon again,  
"Nor of unhappy planets I complain ; 5  
But when my mortal anguish caused my cry,  
That moment I was hurt through either eye ;  
Pierced with a random shaft I faint away,  
And perish with insensible decay :  
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound, 10  
Whom, like Actæon, unaware I found.  
Look how she walks along yon shady space,  
Not Juno moves with more majestic grace ;  
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.  
If thou art Venus, (for thy charms confess 15  
That face was formed in heaven,) nor art thou less ;  
Disguised in habit, undisguised in shape ;  
Oh, help us captives from our chains to 'scape !  
But if our doom be pass'd in bonds to lie  
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die ; 20  
Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our disgrace,  
And show compassion to the Theban race,  
Oppress'd by tyrant power !" — While yet he spoke,  
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look ;  
The fatal dart a ready passage found, 25  
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound :  
So that if Palamon were wounded sore  
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more.  
Then from his inmost soul he sigh'd, and said,

“The beauty I behold has struck me dead :  
Unknowingly she strikes ; and kills by chance ;  
Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.  
Oh, I must ask ; nor ask alone, but move  
Her mind to mercy, or must die for love.”

5

Thus Arcite : and thus Palamon replies,  
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)  
“Speak’st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein ?”  
“Jesting,” said Arcite, “suits but ill with pain.”  
“It suits far worse,” said Palamon again, 10  
And bent his brows, “with men who honor weigh,  
Their faith to break, their friendship to betray ;  
But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,  
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.  
Have we not plighted each our holy oath, 15  
That one should be the common good of both ;  
One soul should both inspire, and neither prove  
His fellow’s hindrance in pursuit of love ?  
To this before the gods we gave our hands,  
And nothing but our death can break the bands. 20  
This binds thee, then, to further my design :  
As I am bound by vow to further thine :  
Nor canst, nor dar’st thou, traitor, on the plain  
Appeach my honor, or thine own maintain,  
Since thou art of my council, and the friend 25  
Whose faith I trust and on whose care depend :  
And wouldst thou court my lady’s love, which I  
Much rather than release would choose to die ?  
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain



Thy bad pretence : I told thee first my pain :  
For first my love began ere thine was born ;  
Thou as my council, and my brother sworn,  
Art bound to assist my eldership of right,  
Or justly to be deem'd a perjur'd knight."

5

Thus Palamon : but Arcite with disdain  
In haughty language thus replied again :  
"Forsworn thyself : the traitor's odious name  
I first return, and then disprove thy claim.  
If love be passion, and that passion nurs'd

10

With strong desires, I lov'd the lady first.  
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflam'd  
To worship, and a power celestial nam'd ?

Thine was devotion to the blest above,  
I saw the woman, and desir'd her love ;

15

First own'd my passion, and to thee commend  
The important secret, as my chosen friend,  
Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire  
A moment elder than my rival fire ;

Can chance of seeing first thy title prove ?

20

And know'st thou not, no law is made for love ;  
Law is to things which to free choice relate ;  
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate ;  
Laws are but positive ; love's power, we see,  
Is Nature's sanction, and her first decree.

25

Each day we break the bond of human laws  
For love, and vindicate the common cause.

Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,

Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste :

Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall ;  
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.  
If then the laws of friendship I transgress,  
I keep the greater, while I break the less ;  
And both are mad alike, since neither can possess. 5  
Both hopeless to be ransom'd, never more  
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.

Like Æsop's hounds contending for the bone,  
Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone :  
The fruitless fight continued all the day, 10  
A cur came by, and snatch'd the prize away.  
As courtiers therefore justle for a grant,  
And when they break their friendship, plead their want,  
So thou, if fortune will thy suit advance,  
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance : 15  
For I must love, and am resolv'd to try  
My fate, or failing in the adventure die."

Great was their strife, which hourly was renew'd,  
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd :  
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand ; 20  
But when they met, they made a surly stand ;  
And glar'd like angry lions as they pass'd,  
And wish'd that every look might be their last.

It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came to attend  
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend ; 25  
Their love in early infancy began,  
And rose as childhood ripen'd into man,  
Companions of the war ; and lov'd so well,  
That when one died, as ancient stories tell,

His fellow to redeem him went to hell.

But, to pursue my tale ; to welcome home

His warlike brother is Pirithous come :

Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since

And honor'd by this young Thessalian prince. 5

Theseus to gratify his friend and guest,

Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,

Restor'd to liberty the captive knight,

But on these hard conditions I recite :

That if hereafter Arcite should be found 10

Within the compass of Athenian ground,

By day or night or on whate'er pretence,

His head should pay the forfeit of th' offence.

To this Pirithous for his friend agreed

And on his promise was the prisoner freed. 15

Unpleas'd and pensive hence he takes his way,

At his own peril ; for his life must pay.

Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,

Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late ?

“What have I gain'd,” he said, “in prison pent, 20

If I but change my bonds for banishment ?

And banished from her sight, I suffer more

In freedom, than I felt in bonds before ;

Forced from her presence, and condemned to live ;

Unwelcome freedom, and unthanked reprieve : 25

Heaven is not, but where Emily abides,

And where she's absent, all is hell besides.

Next to my day of birth, was that accursed,

Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first :

Had I not known that prince, I still had been  
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen :  
For though I never can her grace deserve,  
'Tis recompense enough to see and serve.  
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend, 5  
How much more happy fates thy love attend !  
Thine is the adventure ; thine the victory :  
Well has thy fortune turned the dice for thee :  
Thou on that angel's face may'st feed thine eyes,  
In prison, no ; but blissful paradise ! 10  
Thou daily see'st that sun of beauty shine,  
And lov'st at least in love's extremest line.  
I mourn in absence, love's eternal night ;  
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,  
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight, 15  
Fortune (a various power) may cease to frown,  
And by some ways unknown thy wishes crown ?  
But I, the most forlorn of human kind,  
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find ;  
But doomed to drag my loathsome life in care, 20  
For my reward, must end it in despair.  
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates,  
That governs all, and Heaven that all creates,  
Nor art, nor nature's hand can ease my grief ;  
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief : 25  
Then farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell  
With youth and life, and life itself farewell.

But why, alas ! do mortal men in vain  
Of fortune, fate, or Providence complain ?



God gives us what He knows our wants require,  
And better things than those which we desire :  
Some pray for riches ; riches they obtain ;  
But, watched by robbers, for their wealth are slain :  
Some pray from prison to be freed ; and come, 5  
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home ;  
Murdered by those they trusted with their life,  
A favored servant, or a bosom wife.  
Such dear-bought blessings happen every day,  
Because we know not for what things to pray. 10  
Like drunken sots about the streets we roam ;  
Well knows the sot he has a certain home :  
Yet knows not how to find the uncertain place,  
And blunders on, and staggers every pace.  
Thus all seek happiness ; but few can find, 15  
For far the greater part of men are blind.  
This is my case, who thought our utmost good  
Was in one word of freedom understood :  
The fatal blessing came : from prison free,  
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily.” 20

Thus Arcite : but if Arcite thus deplore  
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.  
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,  
He swells with wrath ; he makes outrageous moan ;  
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground ; 25  
The hollow tower with clamors rings around :  
With briny tears he bathed his fetter'd feet,  
And droop'd all o'er with agony of sweat.  
“ Alas ! ” he cried ; “ I, wretch in prison pine,



Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine :  
Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,  
Pleased with thy freedom, proud of my despair :  
Thou may'st, since thou hast youth and courage join'd,  
A sweet behavior and a solid mind, 5  
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,  
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace ;  
And after, by some treaty made, possess  
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.  
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I 10  
Must languish in despair — in prison die.  
Thus all the advantage of the strife is thine,  
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine."

The rage of jealousy then fired his soul,  
And his face kindled like a burning coal : 15  
Now cold despair, succeeding in her stead,  
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.  
His blood, scarce liquid, creeps within his veins,  
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.  
Then thus he said : "Eternal Deities, 20  
Who rule the world with absolute decrees,  
And write whatever time shall bring to pass,  
With pens of adamant, on plates of brass ;  
What, is the race of human kind your care  
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are ? 25  
He with the rest is liable to pain,  
And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain.  
Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,  
All these he must, and guiltless oft endure ;

Or does your justice, power, or prescience fail,  
When the good suffer, and the bad prevail ?  
What worse to wretched virtue could befall,  
If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all ?

Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate ; 5  
Them, to pursue their pleasures, you create ;  
We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,  
And your commands, not our desires, fulfil ;  
Then, when the creature is unjustly slain,  
Yet after death at least he feels no pain ; 10  
But man in life surcharged with woe before,  
Not freed when dead, is doomed to suffer more.

A serpent shoots his sting at unaware ;  
An ambushed thief forelays a traveller ;  
The man lies murdered, while the thief and snake, 15  
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.  
This let divines decide ; but well I know,  
Just, or unjust, I have my share of woe,  
Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,  
And Juno's wrath, that persecutes my race ; 20  
Or Mars and Venus, in a quartile, move  
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love."

Let Palamon oppress'd in bondage mourn,  
While to his exil'd rival we return.

By this, the sun, declining from his height, 25  
The day had shorten'd to prolong the night :  
The lengthen'd night gave length of misery  
Both to the captive lover and the free.  
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,

And Arcite forfeits life if he returns :  
The banish'd never hopes his love to see,  
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty :  
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains :  
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains : 5  
One free, and all his motions uncontroll'd,  
Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would behold.  
Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell  
What fortune to the banish'd knight befell.

When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again, 10  
The loss of her he lov'd renew'd his pain ;  
What could be worse, than never more to see  
His life, his soul, his charming Emily ?  
He rav'd with all the madness of despair,  
He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair, 15  
Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,  
For, wanting nourishment, he wanted tears :  
His eyeballs in their hollow sockets sink,  
Bereft of sleep he loaths his meat and drink.  
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan 20  
As the pale spectre of a murder'd man :  
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives  
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves  
In solitary groves he makes his moan,  
Walks early out, and ever is alone : 25  
Nor, mix'd in mirth, in youthful pleasures shares,  
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.  
His spirits are so low, his voice is drown'd,  
He hears as from afar, or in a swoond,

Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound :  
Uncomb'd his locks, and squalid his attire,  
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire ;  
But full of museful mopings, which presage  
The loss of reason, and conclude in rage. 5  
This when he had endur'd a year and more,  
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,  
It happen'd once, that, slumbering as he lay,  
He dream'd, (his dream began at break of day)  
That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd, 10  
And with soft words his drooping spirits cheer'd :  
His hat, adorn'd with wings, disclos'd the god,  
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod :  
Such as he seem'd, when, at his sire's command,  
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand. 15  
" Arise," he said, " to conquering Athens go,  
There fate appoints an end to all thy woe."  
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a start,  
Against his bosom bounc'd his heaving heart ;  
But soon he said, with scarce-recover'd breath, 20  
" And thither will I go, to meet my death,  
Sure to be slain ; but death is my desire,  
Since in Emilia's sight I shall expire."  
By chance he spied a mirror while he spoke,  
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look ; 25  
Wond'ring, he saw his features and his hue  
So much were chang'd, that scarce himself he knew.  
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,  
" Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,

The world may search in vain with all their eyes,  
But never penetrate through this disguise.  
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,  
In low estate I may securely live,  
And see unknown my mistress day by day.” 5

He said; and cloth'd himself in coarse array :  
A laboring hind in show ; then forth he went,  
And to the Athenian towers his journey bent :  
One squire attended in the same disguise,  
Made conscious of his master's enterprise. 10  
Arriv'd at Athens, soon he came to court,  
Unknown, unquestion'd, in that thick resort :  
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,  
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.

So fair befell him, that for little gain 15  
He serv'd at first Emilia's chamberlain ;  
And, watchful all advantages to spy,  
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye ;  
And as his bones were big, and sinews strong,  
Refus'd no toil that could to slaves belong ; 20  
But from deep wells with engines water drew,  
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.

He pass'd a year at least attending thus  
On Emily, and call'd Philostratus.  
But never was there man of his degree 25  
So much esteem'd, so well belov'd as he.  
So gentle of condition was he known,  
That through the court his courtesy was blown :  
All think him worthy of a greater place,



And recommend him to the royal grace ;  
That, exercis'd within a higher sphere,  
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.  
Thus by the general voice was Arcite prais'd,  
And by great Theseus to high favor rais'd ; 5  
Among his menial servants first enroll'd,  
And largely entertain'd with sums of gold :  
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,  
Of his own income, and his annual rent :  
This well employ'd he purchased friends and fame, 10  
But cautiously conceal'd from whence it came.  
Thus for three years he lived with large increase,  
In arms of honor, and esteem in peace ;  
To Theseus' person he was ever near ;  
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear. 15

## BOOK II.

WHILE Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns  
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.  
For six long years immured, the captive knight  
Had dragg'd his chains, and scarcely seen the light :  
Lost liberty and love at once he bore : 5  
His prison pain'd him much, his passion more :  
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,  
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.

But when the next revolving year was run,  
And May within the Twins received the sun, 10  
Were it by chance, or forceful destiny,  
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,  
Assisted by a friend, one moonless night,  
This Palamon from prison took his flight ;  
A pleasant beverage he prepared before, 15  
Of wine and honey mix'd with added store  
Of opium ; to his keeper this he brought,  
Who swallow'd unaware the sleepy draught,  
And snored secure till morn, his senses bound  
In slumber, and in long oblivion drown'd. 20  
Short was the night and careful Palamon  
Sought the next covert ere the rising sun.  
A thick spread forest near the city lay,

To this with lengthen'd strides he took his way,  
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day.)  
Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,  
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night  
To Thebes might favor his intended flight. 5  
When to his country come, his next design  
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,  
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,  
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.  
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile, 10  
To gentle Arcite let us turn our style;  
Who little dream'd how nigh he was to care,  
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the snare.  
The morning lark, the messenger of day,  
Saluted in her song the morning gray; 15  
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,  
That all the horizon laughed to see the joyous sight;  
He with his tepid rays the rose renews,  
And licks the dropping leaves, and dries the dews;  
When Arcite left his bed, resolved to pay 20  
Observance to the month of merry May:  
Forth on his fiery steed betimes he rode,  
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trod:  
At ease he seemed, and, prancing o'er the plains,  
Turned only to the grove his horse's reins, 25  
The grove I named before; and, lighted there,  
A woodbine garland sought to crown his hair;  
Then turned his face against the rising day,  
And raised his voice to welcome in the May.

“For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries  
wear,

If not the first, the fairest of the year :  
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,  
And Nature’s ready pencil paints the flowers :  
When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun 5  
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.  
So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,  
Nor goats with venom’d teeth thy tendrils bite,  
As thou shalt guide my wandering feet to find  
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind.” 10

His vows addressed, within the grove he strayed,  
Till Fate or Fortune near the place conveyed  
His steps where secret Palamon was laid.  
Full little thought him of the gentle knight,  
Who, flying death, had there concealed his flight, 15  
In brakes and brambles hid, and shunning mortal sight.  
And less he knew him for his hated foe,  
But feared him as a man he did not know.  
But as it has been said of ancient years,  
The fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears ; 20  
For this the wise are ever on their guard,  
For, unforeseen, they say, is unprepar’d.  
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,  
And less than all suspected Palamon.  
Who list’ning heard him, while he search’d the grove, 25  
And loudly sung his roundelay of love :  
But on the sudden stopp’d, and silent stood,  
As lovers often muse, and change their mood ;

Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell ;  
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well ;  
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,  
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.

Thus Arcite having sung, with alter'd hue  
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew  
A desperate sigh, accusing heaven and fate,  
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.

(“Curs'd be the day when first I did appear ;  
Let it be blotted from the calender,  
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year.  
Still will the jealous Queen pursue our race ?

Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was :  
Yet ceases not her hate : for all who come  
From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.

I suffer for my blood : unjust decree !  
That punishes another's crime on me.

In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,  
The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.

This is not all ; for Juno, to my shame,  
Has forc'd me to forsake my former name ;  
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.

That side of heaven is all my enemy :  
Mars ruin'd Thebes : his mother ruin'd me.

Of all the royal race remains but one  
Besides myself, the unhappy Palamon,  
Whom Theseus holds in bonds, and will not free ;  
Without a crime, except his kin to me.  
Yet these, and all the rest, I could endure ;



But love's a malady without a cure ;  
Fierce Love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,  
He fires within, and hisses at my heart.  
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue ;  
I suffer for the rest, I die for you. 5  
Of such a goddess no time leaves record,  
Who burn'd the temple where she was ador'd :  
And let it burn, I never will complain,  
Pleas'd with my sufferings, if you knew my pain.' 10  
At this a sickly qualm his heart assail'd,  
His ears ring inward, and his senses fail'd.  
No word miss'd Palamon of all he spoke,  
But soon to deadly pale he chang'd his look.  
He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,  
As if cold steel had glided through his heart, 15  
Nor longer staid, but starting from his place,  
Discover'd stood, and show'd his hostile face :  
"False traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,  
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,  
Now art thou found forsworn, for Emily ; 20  
And dar'st attempt her love, for whom I die.  
So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,  
Against thy vow, returning to beguile  
Under a borrow'd name : as false to me,  
So false thou art to him who set thee free ; 25  
But rest assur'd, that either thou shalt die,  
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily ;  
For though unarm'd I am, and (freed by chance)  
Am here without my sword, or pointed lance :



And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign,  
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.  
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon,  
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.  
Arcite return'd, and, as in honor tied, 5  
His foe with bedding and with food supplied;  
Then, ere the day, two suits of armor sought,  
Which borne before him on his steed he brought :  
Both were of shining steel and wrought so pure,  
As might the strokes of two such arms endure. 10  
Now at the time, and in the appointed place,  
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,  
Approach; each other from afar they knew,  
And from afar their hatred changed their hue.  
So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear, 15  
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,  
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees  
His course at distance by the bending trees;  
And thinks, "Here comes my mortal enemy,  
And either he must fall in fight, or I : " 20  
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;  
A generous chillness seizes every part :  
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.  
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;  
None greets; for none the greeting will return : 25  
But in dumb surliness, each armed with care  
His foe professed, as brother of the war :  
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance  
Against each other, armed with sword and lance :

They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore  
Their corslets, and the thinnest parts explore.  
Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,  
And, wounded, wound ; till both were bathed in blood ;  
And not a foot of ground had either got, 5  
As if the world depended on the spot.  
Fell Arcite like an angry tiger fared,  
And like a lion Palamon appeared :  
Or, as two boars, whom love to battle draws,  
With rising bristles, and with frothy jaws, 10  
Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound ;  
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.  
So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,  
Till fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.  
The power that ministers to God's decrees, 15  
And executes on earth what Heaven foresees,  
Called Providence, or Chance, or Fatal Sway,  
Comes with resistless force, and find or makes her way.  
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,  
One moment can retard the appointed hour, 20  
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,  
Which happened not in centuries of years :  
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,  
Or hope, or fear, depends on Powers above ;  
They move our appetites to good or ill, 25  
And by foresight necessitate the will.  
In Theseus this appears ; whose youthful joy  
Was beasts of chase in forests to destroy ;  
This gentle knight, inspired by jolly May,

Forsook his easy couch at early day,  
And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.  
Beside him rode Hippolita the queen,  
And Emily attired in lively green,  
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry, 5  
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh :  
And as he followed Mars before, so now  
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.  
The way that Theseus took was to the wood  
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood : 10  
The laund on which they fought, the appointed place  
In which the uncoupled hounds began the chase.  
Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,  
That shaded by the fern in harbor lay ;  
And thence dislodged, was wont to leave the wood, 15  
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood.  
Approached, and looking underneath the sun,  
He saw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,  
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow ;  
Like lightning flamed their falchions to and fro, 20  
And shot a dreadful gleam ; so strong they strook,  
There seemed less force required to fell an oak :  
He gazed with wonder on their equal might,  
Looked eager on, but knew not either knight.  
Resolved to learn, he spurred his fiery steed 25  
With goring rowels to provoke his speed.  
The minute ended that began the race,  
So soon he was betwixt 'em on the place ;  
And with his sword unsheathed, on pain of life



Commands both combatants to cease their strife :  
Then with imperious tone pursues his threat ;  
“ What are you ? why in arms together met ?  
How dares your pride presume against my laws,  
As in a listed field to fight your cause ? 5  
Unasked the royal grant ; no marshal by,  
As knightly rites require ; nor judge to try ? ”  
Then Palamon, with scarce recovered breath,  
Thus hasty spoke : “ We both deserve the death,  
And both would die ; for look the world around, 10  
A pair so wretched is not to be found.  
Our life’s a load ; encumbered with the charge,  
We long to set the imprisoned soul at large.  
Now, as thou art a sovereign judge, decree  
The rightful doom of death to him and me ; 15  
Let neither find thy grace ; for grace is cruelty.  
Me first, oh, kill me first ; and cure my woe :  
Then sheathe the sword of justice on my foe :  
Or kill him first ; for when his name is heard,  
He foremost will receive his due reward 20  
Arcite of Thebes is he ; thy mortal foe :  
On whom thy grace did liberty bestow,  
But first contracted, that if ever found  
By day or night upon the Athenian ground,  
His head should pay the forfeit ; see return’d 25  
The perjured knight, his oath and honor scorn’d.  
For this is he, who, with a borrow’d name,  
And proffer’d service, to thy palace came,  
Now call’d Philostratus : retained by thee,

A traitor trusted, and in high degree,  
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.  
My part remains : from Thebes my birth I own,  
And call myself the unhappy Palamon.  
Think me not like that man ; since no disgrace 5  
Can force me to renounce the honor of my race.  
Know me for what I am : I broke my chain,  
Nor promised I thy prisoner to remain :  
(The love of liberty with life is given,  
And life itself the inferior gift of Heaven) 10  
Thus without crime I fled ; but farther know,  
I, with this Arcite, am thy mortal foe :  
Then give me death, since I thy life pursue ;  
For safeguard of thyself, death is my due.  
More wouldst thou know ? I love bright Emily, 15  
And, for her sake, and in her sight, will die :  
But kill my rival too ; for he no less  
Deserves ; and I thy righteous doom will bless,  
Assur'd that what I lose, he never shall possess."  
To this replied the stern Athenian prince, 20  
And sourly smil'd, " In owning your offence  
You judge yourself ; and I but keep record  
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.  
Take your desert, the death you have decreed ;  
I seal your doom, and ratify the deed : 25  
By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die."  
He said ; dumb sorrow seiz'd the standers-by.  
The queen above the rest, by nature good,  
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)

For tender pity wept : when she began,  
Through the bright quire the infectious virtue ran.  
All dropt their tears, e'en the contended maid :  
And thus among themselves they softly said :  
“ What eyes can suffer this unworthy sight ! 5  
Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,  
The mastership of heaven in face and mind,  
And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind :  
See their wide-streaming wounds : they neither came  
For pride of empire, nor desire of fame : 10  
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause :  
But love for love alone ; that crowns the lover's cause.”  
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,  
Such pity wrought in every lady's mind,  
They left their steeds, and prostrate on the place, 15  
From the fierce king implor'd the offenders' grace.

He paused a while, stood silent in his mood,  
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood ;)  
But soon his tender mind the impression felt,  
(As softest metals are not slow to melt, 20  
And pity soonest runs in softest minds :)  
Then reasons with himself ; and first he finds  
His passion cast a mist before his sense,  
And either made, or magnified the offence.  
“ Offence ! of what ? to whom ? who judg'd the cause ? 25  
The prisoner freed himself by nature's laws :  
Born free, he sought his right : the man he freed  
Was perjurd, but his love excus'd the deed.”  
Thus pondering, he look'd under with his eyes,

And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries ;  
Which mov'd compassion more, he shook his head,  
And softly sighing to himself he said :

“Curse on the unpardoning prince, whom tears can  
draw

To no remorse ; who rules by lions' law ; 5

And deaf to prayers, by no submission bow'd,  
Rends all alike ; the penitent and proud !”

At this, with look serene, he rais'd his head ;

Reason resum'd her place, and passion fled :

Then thus aloud he spoke : “The power of love, 10

In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,

Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod ;

By daily miracles declar'd a god :

He blinds the wise, gives eyesight to the blind ;

And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind. 15

Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,

Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,

What hinder'd either in their native soil

At ease to reap the harvest of their toil ?

But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain, 20

And brought 'em in their own despite again

To suffer death deserv'd ; for well they know,

'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe.

The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,

Is hardly granted to the gods above. 25

See how the madmen bleed : behold the gains

With which their master, Love, rewards their pains.

For seven long years, on duty every day,

Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay :  
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on ;  
And, ask the fools, they think it wisely done ;  
Nor ease, nor wealth, nor life itself, regard,  
For 'tis their maxim, Love is love's reward. 5  
This is not all ; the fair, for whom they strove,  
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love,  
Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,  
Her beauty was the occasion of the war.  
(But sure a general doom on man is past, 10  
And all are fools and lovers, first or last :  
This, both by others and myself, I know  
For I have serv'd their sovereign long ago ;  
Oft have been caught within the winding train  
Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain, 15  
And learn'd how far the god can human hearts constrain.)  
To this remembrance, and the prayers of those  
Who for the offending warriors interpose,  
I give their forfeit lives ; on this accord,  
To do me homage as their sovereign lord ; 20  
And as my vassals, to their utmost might,  
Assist my person, and assert my right."  
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.  
Then thus the king his secret thoughts explain'd :  
" If wealth, or honor, or a royal race, 25  
Or each, or all may win a lady's grace,  
Then either of you knights may well deserve  
A princess born ; and such is she you serve :



For Emily is sister to the crown,  
And but too well to both her beauty known :  
But should you combat till you both were dead,  
Two lovers cannot share a single bed :  
As therefore both are equal in degree, 5  
The lot of both be left to destiny.  
Now hear the award, and happy may it prove  
To her, and him who best deserves her love.  
Depart from hence in peace, and, free as air,  
Search the wide world, and where you please repair ; 10  
But on the day when this returning sun  
To the same point through every sign has run,  
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring,  
In royal lists to fight before the king ;  
And then the knight, whom fate or happy chance 15  
Shall with his friends to victory advance,  
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,  
From out the bars to force his opposite,  
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,  
The prize of valor and of love shall gain ; 20  
The vanquished party shall their claim release,  
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.  
The charge be mine to adorn the chosen ground,  
The theatre of war, for champions so renowned ;  
And take the patron's place, of either knight, 25  
With eyes impartial to behold the fight ;  
And Heaven of me so judge as I shall judge aright.  
If both are satisfied with this accord,  
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword."

Who now but Palamon exults with joy?  
And ravished Arcite seems to touch the sky:  
The whole assembled troop was pleased as well,  
Extolled the award, and on their knees they fell  
To bless the gracious king. The knights with leave 5  
Departing from the place, his last commands receive;  
On Emily with equal ardor look,  
And from her eyes their inspiration took.  
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,  
Each to provide his champions for the day. 10

It might be deemed, on our historian's part,  
Or too much negligence, or want of art,  
If he forgot the vast magnificence  
Of royal Theseus, and his large expense.  
He first inclosed for lists a level ground, 15  
The whole circumference a mile around;  
The form was circular; and all without  
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.  
Within an amphitheatre appeared,  
Raised in degrees, to sixty paces reared: 20  
That when a man was placed in one degree,  
Height was allowed for him above to see.

Eastward was built a gate of marble white;  
The like adorned the western opposite.  
A nobler object than this fabric was, 25  
Rome never saw; nor of so vast a space.  
For rich with spoils of many a conquered land,  
All arts and artists Theseus could command;  
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame;

The master painters, and the carvers, came.  
So rose within the compass of the year  
An age's work, a glorious theatre.  
Then o'er its eastern gate was raised above  
A temple, sacred to the Queen of Love; 5  
An altar stood below: on either hand  
A priest with roses crowned, who held a myrtle wand.

The dome of Mars was on the gate opposed,  
And on the north a turret was inclosed,  
Within the walls of alabaster white, 10  
And crimson coral for the Queen of Night,  
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.

Within these oratories might you see  
Rich carvings, portraitures, and imagery:  
Where every figure to the life expressed 15  
The godhead's power to whom it was addressed.  
In Venus' temple on the sides were seen  
The broken slumbers of enamored men,  
Prayers that even spoke, and pity seemed to call,  
And issuing sighs that smoked along the wall. 20  
Complaints and hot desires, the lover's hell,  
And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell:  
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties  
Of love's assurance; and a train of lies,  
That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries. 25  
Beauty, and Youth, and Wealth, and Luxury,  
And sprightly Hope, and short-enduring Joy;  
And Sorceries to raise the infernal powers,  
And Sigils framed in planetary hours:

Expense, and After-thought, and idle Care,  
And Doubts of motley hue, and Dark Despair;  
Suspensions, and fantastical Surmise,  
And Jealousy suffused, with jaundice in her eyes,  
Discoloring all she viewed, in tawny dressed; 5  
Down-looked, and with a cuckoo on her fist.  
Opposed to her, on t'other side advance  
The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,  
Minstrels and music, poetry and play,  
And balls by night, and tournaments by day. 10  
All these were painted on the wall, and more;  
With acts and monuments of times before:  
And others added by prophetic doom,  
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come;  
For there the Idalian mount, and Citheron, 15  
The court of Venus, was in colors drawn:  
Before the palace-gate, in careless dress,  
And loose array, sat portress Idleness:  
There, by the fount, Narcissus pined alone;  
There Samson was; with wiser Solomon, 20  
And all the mighty names by love undone.  
Medea's charms were there, Circean feasts,  
With bowls that turn'd enamor'd youths to beasts:  
Here might be seen that beauty, wealth, and wit,  
And prowess, to the power of love submit: 25  
The spreading snare for all mankind is laid;  
And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.  
The goddess' self some noble hand had wrought;  
Smiling she seem'd, and full of pleasing thought:

From ocean as she first began to rise,  
And smooth'd the ruffled seas, and clear'd the skies;  
She trod the brine all bare below the breast,  
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the rest.  
A lute she held; and on her head was seen 5  
A wreath of roses red, and myrtles green;  
Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;  
And, by his mother stood an infant Love,  
With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er;  
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore, 10  
Supplied with arrows bright and keen, a deadly store.

But in the dome of mighty Mars the red  
With different figures all the sides were spread;  
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,  
Was imitative of the first in Thrace: 15  
For that cold region was the lov'd abode,  
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.  
The landscape was a forest wide and bare;  
Where neither beast, nor humankind repair;  
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly, 20  
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.  
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,  
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;  
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old;  
Headless the most, and hideous to behold. 25  
A rattling tempest through the branches went,  
That stripp'd 'em bare, and one sole way they bent.  
Heaven froze above, severe, the clouds congeal,  
And through the crystal vault appear'd the standing hail.



Such was the face without : a mountain stood  
Threat'ning from high, and overlook'd the wood :  
Beneath the low'ring brow, and on a bent,  
The temple stood of Mars armipotent :  
The frame of burnish'd steel, that cast a glare 5  
From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air.  
A straight long entry to the temple led,  
Blind with high walls, and horror over head :  
Thence issued such a blast, and hollow roar,  
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door ; 10  
In through that door a northern light there shone ;  
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.  
The gate was adamant ; eternal frame !  
Which, hew'd by Mars himself, from Indian quarries  
came,  
The labor of a god ; and all along 15  
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it strong.  
A tun about was every pillar there ;  
A polish'd mirror shone not half so clear.  
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,  
And treason laboring in the traitor's thought, 20  
And midwife Time the ripen'd plot to murder brought.  
There the red Anger dar'd the pallid Fear ;  
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer  
Soft smiling, and demurely looking down,  
But hid the dagger underneath the gown : 25  
The assassinating wife, the household fiend ;  
And far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.  
On t'other side there stood Destruction bare ;

Unpunish'd Rapine, and a waste of war.  
Contest, with sharpen'd knives, in cloisters drawn,  
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.  
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,  
And brawling infamy, in language base; 5  
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place.  
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,  
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair :  
With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,  
And grim, as when he breath'd his sullen soul away. 10  
In midst of all the dome Misfortune sat,  
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,  
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood ;  
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.  
There was the murder'd corpse, in covert laid, 15  
And violent death in thousand shapes display'd :  
The city to the soldier's rage resign'd :  
Successless wars, and poverty behind :  
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky shores,  
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars : 20  
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid ;  
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.  
All ills of Mars his nature, flame, and steel :  
The gasping charioteer, beneath the wheel  
Of his own car ; the ruined house that falls 25  
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls :  
The whole division that to Mars pertains,  
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains,  
Were there : the butcher, armorer, and smith,

Who forges sharpened falchions, or the scythe.  
The scarlet Conquest on a tower was placed,  
With shouts and soldiers' acclamations graced ;  
A pointed sword hung threatening o'er his head,  
Sustain'd but by a slender twine of thread. 5  
There saw I Mars his ides, the Capitol,  
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall ;  
The last Triumvirs, and the wars they move,  
And Antony, who lost the world for love.  
These and a thousand more, the fane adorn ; 10  
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,  
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force  
Of the Red Star, in his revolving course. -  
The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,  
All sheathed in arms, and gruffly looked the god : 15  
Two geomantic figures were displayed  
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,  
One when direct, and one when retrograde.  
Tired with deformities of death, I haste  
To the third temple of Diana chaste. 20  
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,  
Shades on the sides, and in the midst a lawn :  
The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,  
Pursued the flying deer, the woods with horns resound :  
Calisto there stood manifest of shame, 25  
And, turned a bear, the northern star became :  
Her son was next, and, by peculiar grace,  
In the cold circle held the second place :  
The stag Actæon in the stream had spied

The naked huntress, and, for seeing, died :  
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue  
The chase, and their mistaken master slew.  
Peneian Daphne too was there to see,  
Apollo's love before, and now his tree : 5  
The adjoining fane the assembled Greeks expressed,  
And hunting of the Calydonian beast.  
Cenides' valor, and his envied prize :  
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes ;  
Diana's vengeance on the victor shown, 10  
The murderess mother, and consuming son ;  
The Volscian queen extended on the plain ;  
The treason punished, and the traitor slain.  
The rest were various huntings, well design'd,  
And savage beasts destroy'd, of every kind. 15  
The graceful goddess was array'd in green ;  
About her feet were little beagles seen,  
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their  
queen.  
Her legs were buskin'd, and the left before  
In act to shoot ; a silver bow she bore, 20  
And at her back a painted quiver wore.  
She trod a waxing moon, that soon would wane,  
And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again :  
With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey  
The dark dominions, her alternate sway. 25  
Before her stood a woman in her throes,  
And call'd Lucina's aid her burthen to disclose.  
All these the painter drew with such command,

That Nature snatch'd the pencil from his hand,  
Ashamed and angry that his art could feign  
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.  
Theseus beheld the fanes of every god,  
And thought his mighty cost was well bestow'd.  
So princes now their poets should regard;  
But few can write, and fewer can reward.

5

The theatre thus raised, the lists inclosed,  
And all with vast magnificence disposed,  
We leave the monarch pleased, and haste to bring  
The knights to combat, and their arms to sing.

10



## BOOK III.

THE day approach'd when fortune should decide  
The important enterprise, and give the bride ;  
For now, the rivals round the world had sought,  
And each his number, well appointed, brought.  
The nations, far and near, contend in choice, 5  
And send the flower of war by public voice ;  
That after, or before, were never known  
Such chiefs, as each an army seem'd alone :  
Besides the champions, all of high degree,  
Who knighthood loved, and deeds of chivalry, 10  
Throng'd to the lists, and envied to behold  
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.  
Nor seems it strange ; for every noble knight  
Who loves the fair, and is endued with might,  
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight. 15  
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground  
(An isle for love, and arms, of old renowned)  
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,  
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name :  
And had the land selected of the best, 20  
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.  
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,  
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name ;

Their arms were several, as their nations were,  
But furnish'd all alike with sword and spear,  
Some wore coat-armor, imitating scale ;  
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail.  
Some wore a breastplate and a light jupon, 5  
Their horses cloth'd with rich caparison :  
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use  
Of folded hides ; and others shields of Pruce.  
One hung a poleaxe at his saddle bow,  
And one a heavy mace to shun the foe ; 10  
One for his legs and knees provided well,  
With jambeux arm'd, and double plates of steel :  
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,  
And that a sleeve embroider'd by his love.

With Palamon above the rest in place, 15  
Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace ;  
Black was his beard, and manly was his face ;  
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,  
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red :  
He look'd a lion with a gloomy stare, 20  
And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair :  
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with sinews strong,  
Broad shoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.  
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)  
Were yok'd to draw his car of burnish'd gold. 25  
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,  
Conspicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field.  
His surcoat was a bear-skin on his back ;  
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven black ;

His ample forehead bore a coronet  
With sparkling diamonds and with rubies set :  
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair  
And tall as stags, ran loose, and cours'd around his  
    chair,

A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear ; 5  
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,  
And collars of the same their necks surround.

Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way ;  
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.  
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came 10

Emetrius, king of Inde, a mighty name,  
On a bay courser, goodly to behold,  
The trappings of his horse adorn'd with barbarous gold.

Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace ;  
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace, 15  
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great.

His saddle was of gold, with emerald set,  
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,  
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire :

His amber-color'd locks in ringlets run, 20  
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.

His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,  
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue :  
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,

Whose dusk set off the whiteness of his skin : 25  
His awful presence did the crowd surprise,  
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes :

Eyes that confess'd him born for kingly sway,

So fierce, they flash'd intolerable day.  
His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,  
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.  
Whene'er he spoke his voice was heard around,  
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound : 5  
A laurel wreath'd his temples, fresh, and green ;  
And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd be-  
tween.

Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,  
An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily white.

His hundred knights attend him to the war, 10  
All arm'd for battle ; save their heads were bare.  
Words and devices blaz'd on every shield,  
And pleasing was the terror of the field.  
For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might see,  
Like sparkling stars, though different in degree, 15  
All for the increase of arms, and love of chivalry.  
Before the king tame leopards led the way,  
And troops of lions innocently play.  
So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,  
And beasts in gambols frisk'd before their honest god. 20

In this array the war of either side  
Through Athens pass'd with military pride.  
At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn ;  
Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the posts  
adorn.

The town was all a jubilee of feasts ; 25  
So Theseus will'd, in honor of his guests :  
Himself with open arms the kings embrac'd,

Then all the rest in their degrees were grac'd.  
No harbinger was needful for the night,  
For every house was proud to lodge a knight.

I pass the royal treat, nor must relate  
The gifts bestow'd, nor how the champions sate : 5  
Who first, who last, or how the knights address'd  
Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast ;  
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprise,  
Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes.  
The rivals call my Muse another way, 10  
To sing their vigils for the ensuing day.

'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night :  
And Phosphor, on the confines of the light,  
Promised the sun ; ere day began to spring,  
The tuneful lark already stretched her wing, 15  
And flickering on her nest made short essays to sing.

When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,  
Took to the royal lists his early way,  
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray.  
There, falling on his knees before her shrine, 20  
He thus implored with prayers her power divine :  
“ Creator Venus, genial power of love,  
The bliss of men below, and gods above !  
Beneath the sliding sun thou runn'st thy race,  
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place. 25  
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,  
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.  
Thee, goddess, thee the storms of winter fly,  
Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky,



And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.  
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair :  
All nature is thy province, life thy care :  
Thou madest the world, and dost the world repair.  
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron, 5  
Increase of Jove, companion of the sun ;  
If e'er Adonis touched thy tender heart,  
Have pity, goddess, for thou know'st the smart,  
Alas ! I have not words to tell my grief ;  
To vent my sorrow would be some relief ; 10  
Light sufferings give us leisure to complain ;  
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.  
O goddess, tell thyself what I would say,  
Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.  
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might, 15  
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight ;  
A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,  
A foe professed to barren chastity.  
Nor ask I fame or honor of the field,  
Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield : 20  
In my divine Emilia make me blest,  
Let Fate, or partial Chance, dispose the rest :  
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare ;  
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.  
Mars is the warrior's god ; in him it lies, 25  
On whom he favors to confer the prize ;  
With smiling aspect you serenely move  
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.  
The Fates but only spin the coarser clue,

The finest of the wool is left for you ;  
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,  
And let the sisters cut below your line :  
The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,  
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap,                   5  
But if you this ambitious prayer deny,  
(A wish, I grant, beyond mortality,)  
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,  
And I once dead, let him possess her charms."

Thus ended he ; then with observance due                   10  
The sacred incense on her altar threw :  
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires ;  
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires ;  
At once the gracious goddess gave the sign,  
Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine :                   15  
Pleased Palamon the tardy omen took ;  
For, since the flames pursued the trailing smoke,  
He knew his boon was granted ; but the day  
To distance driven, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.

Now morn with rosy light had streak'd the sky,                   20  
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily ;  
Address'd her early steps to Cynthia's fane,  
In state attended by her maiden train,  
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,  
Incense, and odorous gums, and cover'd fire.                   25  
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,  
Nor wanted aught besides in honor of the Moon.  
Now while the temple smoked with hallow'd steam,  
They wash the virgin in a living stream ;

The secret ceremonies I conceal,  
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal :  
But such they were as pagan use required,  
Perform'd by women when the men retired,  
Whose eyes profane their chaste, mysterious rites 5  
Might turn to scandal, or obscene delights.  
Well-meaners think no harm ; but for the rest,  
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.  
Her shining hair, uncomb'd, was loosely spread,  
A crown of mastless oak adorn'd her head : 10  
When to the shrine approach'd, the spotless maid  
Had kindling fires on either altar laid :  
(The rites were such as were observed of old,  
By Statius in his Theban story told.)  
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast, 15  
Thus slowly she preferr'd her chaste request :  
    " Oh, goddess ! haunter of the woodland green,  
To whom both heaven and earth and seas are seen ;  
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year  
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere ;  
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts, 21  
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,  
(Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,  
When hissing through the skies the feather'd deaths  
    were dealt ;)   
As I desire to live a virgin life, 25  
Nor know the name of mother or of wife,  
Thy votress from my tender years I am,  
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.

Like death, thou know'st, I loath the nuptial state,  
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,  
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate;  
Where love is duty on a female side,  
On theirs mere sensual gust, and sought with surly  
pride. 5

Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen  
In heaven, earth, hell, and everywhere a queen,  
Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,  
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace;  
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove 10  
The flame, and turn it on some other love;  
Or, if my frowning stars have so decreed,  
That one must be rejected, one succeed,  
Make him my lord, within whose faithful breast  
Is fix'd my image, and who loves me best. 15  
But, oh! e'en that avert; I choose it not,  
But take it as the least unhappy lot.

A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;  
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!  
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey, 20  
And only make the beasts of chase my prey!"

The flames ascend on either altar clear,  
While thus the blameless maid address'd her prayer.  
When lo! the burning fire that shone so bright,  
Flew off all sudden, with extinguish'd light, 25  
And left one altar dark, a little space;  
Which turn'd self-kindled, and renew'd the blaze.  
That other victor-flame a moment stood,

Then fell, and lifeless left the extinguish'd wood ;  
For ever lost, the irrevocable light  
Forsook the black'ning coals, and sunk to night :  
At either end it whistled as it flew,  
And as the brands were green, so dropp'd the dew ;      5  
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue.

The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,  
And with loud shrieks and clamors rent the skies,  
Nor knew what signified the boding sign,  
But found the powers displeas'd, and fear'd the wrath  
divine.      10

Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light  
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple  
bright.

The power, behold ! the power in glory shone,  
By her bent bow, and her keen arrows known ;  
The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,      15  
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood.  
Then gracious thus began : " Dismiss thy fear,  
And Heaven's unchang'd decrees attentive hear :  
More powerful gods have torn thee from my side,  
Unwilling to resign, and doom'd a bride :      20  
The two contending knights are weigh'd above ;  
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love :  
But which the man, is in the Thunderer's breast ;  
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee best :  
The fire that, once extinct, reviv'd again,      25  
Foreshows the love allotted to remain :  
Farewell ! " she said, and vanish'd from the place ;



The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.  
 Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,  
 Disclaim'd, and now no more a sister of the wood :  
 But to the parting goddess thus she pray'd :

“ Propitious still be present to my aid, 5

Nor quite abandon your once favor'd maid.”

Then sighing she return'd, but smil'd betwixt,  
 With hopes, and fears, and joys with sorrows mix'd.

The next returning planetary hour  
 Of Mars, who shar'd the heptarchy of power, 10

His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,  
 To adore with pagan rites the power armipotent :

Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,  
 And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray :  
 “ Strong god of arms, whose iron sceptre sways 15

The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,  
 And Scythian colds, and Thracia's wintry coast,  
 Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honor'd most ;  
 There most ; but everywhere thy power is known,

The fortune of the fight is all thy own : 20

Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung  
 From out thy chariot, withers e'en the strong.

And disarray and shameful rout ensue,  
 And force is added to the fainting crew.

Acknowledged as thou art, accept my prayer, 25  
 If aught I have achieved deserve thy care :

If to my utmost power with sword and shield  
 I dared the death, unknowing how to yield,  
 And falling in my rank, still kept the field :

Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustain'd,  
That Emily by conquest may be gain'd.  
Have pity on my pains ; nor those unknown  
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.  
Venus, the public care of all above, 5  
Thy stubborn heart has soften'd into love :  
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,  
And make me conquer in my patron's right :  
For I am young, a novice in the trade,  
The fool of love, unpractised to persuade : 10  
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,  
But caught myself, lie struggling in the snare :  
And she I love, or laughs at all my pain,  
Or knows her worth too well ; and pays me with disdain.  
For sure I am, unless I win in arms, 15  
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms :  
Nor can my strength avail, unless by thee  
Endued with force, I gain the victory :  
Then for the fire which warm'd thy generous heart,  
Pity thy subject's pains, and equal smart. 20  
So be the morrow's sweat and labor mine,  
The palm and honor of the conquest thine :  
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife  
Immortal, be the business of my life ;  
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among, 25  
High on the burnish'd roof, my banner shall be hung :  
Ranked with my champions' bucklers, and below,  
With arms reversed, the achievements of my foe :  
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,

While day to night, and night to day succeeds,  
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food  
Of incense, and the grateful steam of blood ;  
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine,  
And fires eternal in thy temple shine. 5  
This bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,  
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,  
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,  
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserved for thee.  
So may my arms with victory be blest, 10  
I ask no more ; let Fate dispose the rest."

The champion ceased ; there followed in the close  
A hollow groan : a murmuring wind arose ;  
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,  
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung : 15  
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,  
The storm rushed in, and Arcite stood aghast :  
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,  
Fanned by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.

Then from the ground a scent began to rise, 20  
Sweet smelling as accepted sacrifice :  
This omen pleased, and as the flames aspire  
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fire :  
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms :  
At length the nodding statue clashed his arms, 25  
And with a sullen sound and feeble cry,  
Half sunk, and half pronounced " Victory."  
For this, with soul devout, he thanked the god,  
And, of success secure, returned to his abode.

These vows thus granted, raised a strife above,  
Betwixt the God of War, and Queen of Love.  
She, granting first, had right of time to plead ;  
But he had granted too, nor would recede.  
Jove was for Venus ; but he feared his wife, 5  
And seemed unwilling to decide the strife ;  
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,  
And found a way the difference to compose :  
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,  
He seldom does a good with good intent. 10  
Wayward, but wise ; by long experience taught,  
To please both parties, for ill ends, he sought :  
For this advantage age from youth has won,  
As not to be outridden though outrun.  
By fortune he has now to Venus trined, 15  
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was joined :  
Of him disposing in his own abode,  
He soothed the goddess, while he gulled the god :  
“ Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife :  
Thy Palamon shall have his promised wife : 20  
And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight  
With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.  
Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place,  
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.  
Man feels me, when I press the ethereal plains, 25  
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.  
Mine is the shipwreck, in a watery sign ;  
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.  
Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,



And bitter blasting winds, and poisoned air,  
Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair.  
The throttling quincey 'tis my star appoints,  
And rheumatisms ascend to rack the joints :  
When churls rebel against their native prince, 5  
I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence ;  
And housing in the lion's hateful sign,  
Bought senates, and deserting troops are mine.  
Mine is the privy poisoning ; I command 10  
Unkindly seasons, and ungrateful land.  
By me kings' palaces are pushed to ground,  
And miners crushed beneath their mines are found.  
'Twas I slew Samson, when the pillared hall  
Fell down, and crushed the many with the fall.  
My looking is the sire of pestilence, 15  
That sweeps at once the people and the prince.  
Now weep no more, but trust thy grandsire's art,  
Mars shall be pleased, and thou perform thy part.  
'Tis ill, though different your complexions are ;  
The family of Heaven for men should war." 20  
The expedient pleased, where neither lost his right ;  
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.  
The management they left to Chronos' care ;  
Now turn we to the effect, and sing the war.  
In Athens all was pleasure, mirth, and play. 25  
All proper to the spring, and sprightly May ;  
Which every soul inspired with such delight,  
'Twas jesting all the day, and love at night.  
Heaven smiled, and gladdened was the heart of man ;



And Venus had the world as when it first began.  
At length in sleep their bodies they compose,  
And dream'd the future fight, and early rose.

Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,  
As at a signal given, the streets with clamors ring: 5  
At once the crowd arose; confused and high.  
Even from the heaven was heard a shouting cry;  
For Mars was early up, and roused the sky.  
The gods came downward to behold the wars,  
Sharpening their sights, and leaning from their stars. 10  
The neighing of the generous horse was heard,  
For battle by the busy groom prepared:  
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,  
Clattering of armor, furbished for the field.  
Crowds to the castle mounted up the street, 15  
Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet;  
The greedy sight might there devour the gold  
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold:  
And polished steel, that cast the view aside,  
And crested morions, with their plummy pride. 20  
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,  
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.  
One laced the helm, another held the lance:  
A third the shining buckler did advance.  
The courser pawed the ground with restless feet, 25  
And snorting foamed, and champ'd the golden bit.  
The smiths and armorers on palfreys ride,  
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,  
And nails for loosened spears, and thongs for shields  
provide.

The yeomen guard the streets, in seemly bands ;  
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their  
hands.

The trumpets, next the gate, in order placed,  
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast :  
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides, 5  
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.  
The throng is in the midst : the common crew  
Shut out, the hall admits the better few ;  
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,  
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk : 10  
Factious, and favoring this or t'other side,  
As their strong fancy or weak reason guide :  
Their wagers back their wishes ; numbers hold  
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold :  
So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast, 15  
So prominent his eagle's beak is placed.  
But most their looks on the black monarch bend,  
His rising muscles, and his brawn commend ;  
His double-biting axe, and beamy spear,  
Each asking a gigantic force to rear. 20  
All spoke as partial favor moved the mind ;  
And, safe themselves, at others' cost divined.

Waked by the cries, the Athenian chief arose,  
The knightly forms of combat to dispose ;  
And passing through the obsequious guards, he sate 25  
Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state ;  
There, for the two contending knights he sent :  
Arm'd *cap-a-pie*, with reverence low they bent :

He smiled on both, and with superior look  
Alike their offer'd adoration took.  
The people press on every side to see  
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.  
Then signing to their heralds with his hand, 5  
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.  
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud  
The king at arms bespeaks the knights and listening  
crowd:

“Our sovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind  
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind; 10  
And of his grace, and inborn clemency,  
He modifies his first severe decree!  
The keener edge of battle to rebate  
The troops for honor fighting, not for hate.  
He wills, not death should terminate their strife; 15  
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life:  
But issues, ere the fight, his dread command,  
That slings afar, and poniards hand to hand,  
Be banish'd from the field; that none shall dare  
With shorten'd sword to stab in closer war; 20  
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,  
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length,  
The tourney is allow'd but one career,  
Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear,  
But knights unhors'd may rise from off the plain, 25  
And fight on foot their honor to regain;  
Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground  
Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,

At either barrier plac'd ; nor (captives made,)  
Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.  
The chief of either side, bereft of life,  
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.  
Thus dooms the lord : now valiant knights and young, 5  
Fight each his fill with swords and maces long."  
The herald ends : the vaulted firmament  
With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent :  
" Heaven guard a prince so gracious and so good,  
So just, and yet so provident of blood ! " 10  
This was the general cry. The trumpets sound,  
And warlike symphony is heard around.  
The marching troops through Athens take their way,  
The great earl-marshal orders their array.  
The fair from high the passing pomp behold ; 15  
A rain of flowers is from the windows roll'd.  
The casements are with golden tissue spread,  
And horses' hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread.  
The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride  
In equal rank, and close his either side. 20  
Next after these, there rode the royal wife,  
With Emily, the cause, and the reward of strife.  
The following cavalcade, by three and three,  
Proceed by titles marshall'd in degree.  
Thus through the southern gate they take their way, 25  
And at the list arriv'd ere prime of day.  
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,  
And wheeling east and west, before their many ride.  
The Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,



And after him the queen and Emily :  
Next these, the kindred of the crown are grac'd  
With nearer seats, and lords by ladies plac'd.  
Scarce were they seated, when with clamors loud  
In rush'd at once a rude promiscuous crowd : 5  
The guards, and then each other overbear,  
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.  
Now chang'd the jarring noise to whispers low,  
As winds forsaking seas more softly blow ;  
When at the western gate, on which the car 10  
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the god of war,  
Proud Arcite, ent'ring arm'd before his train,  
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.  
Red was his banner, and display'd abroad  
The bloody colors of his patron god. 15

At that self moment enters Palamon,  
The gate of Venus, and the rising sun ;  
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,  
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.  
From east to west, look all the world around, 20  
Two troops so match'd were never to be found ;  
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,  
In stature siz'd ; so proud an equipage  
The nicest eye could no distinction make,  
Where lay the advantage, or what side to take. 25

Thus rang'd, the herald for the last proclaims  
A silence, while they answer'd to their names :  
For so the king decreed, to shun with care  
The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.



The tale was just, and then the gates were clos'd ;  
And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.  
The heralds last retir'd, and loudly cried,  
The fortune of the field be fairly tried.

At this, the challenger with fierce defy 5  
His trumpet sounds ; the challeng'd makes reply :  
With clangor rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.  
Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the rest,  
Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest,  
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race, 10  
And spurring see decrease the middle space.  
A cloud of smoke envelopes either host,  
And all at once the combatants are lost :  
Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,  
Coursers with coursers justling, men with men ; 15  
As laboring in eclipse, a while they stay,  
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.  
They look anew ; the beauteous form of fight  
Is chang'd, and war appears a grisly sight.  
Two troops in fair array one moment show'd, 20  
The next, a field with fallen bodies strow'd :  
Not half the number in their seats are found ;  
But men and steeds lie grovelling on the ground.  
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,  
The steeds without their riders scour the field. 25  
The knights, unhors'd, on foot renew the fight ;  
The glittering falchions cast a gleaming light :  
Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound,  
Out spins the streaming blood and dyes the ground.

The mighty maces with such haste descend,  
They break the bones, and make the solid armor bend.  
This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;  
Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:  
That courser stumbles on the fallen steed, 5  
And flound'ring throws the rider o'er his head.  
One rolls along, a football to his foes;  
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.  
This halting, this disabled with his wound,  
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound, 10  
Where by the king's award he must abide:  
There goes a captive led on t'other side.  
By fits they cease; and leaning on the lance,  
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.  
Full oft the rivals meet, and neither spar'd 15  
His utmost force, and each forgot to ward.  
The head of this was to the saddle bent,  
That other backward to the crupper sent:  
Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows  
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close. 20  
So deep their falchions bite, that every stroke  
Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.  
Borne far asunder by the tides of men,  
Like adamant and steel they meet again.  
So when a tiger sucks the bullock's blood, 25  
A famish'd lion issuing from the wood  
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.  
Each claims possession, neither will obey,  
But both their paws are fasten'd on the prey;

They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,  
The swains come arm'd between, and both to distance  
drive.

At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend  
By course of time to their appointed end;  
So, when the sun to west was far declin'd, 5  
And both afresh in mortal battle join'd,  
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,  
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:  
For turning short, he struck with all his might  
Full on the helmet of the unwary knight. 10  
Deep was the wound; he stagger'd with the blow,  
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;  
Whom with such force he struck, he fell'd him down,  
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.  
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight, 15  
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:  
O'erpower'd, at length, they force him to the ground,  
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;  
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain  
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain. 20

Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd  
No more to try the fortune of the field!  
And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes  
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!

The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd, 25  
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,  
Bade cease the war; pronouncing from on high,  
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.

The sound of trumpets to the voice replied,  
And round the royal lists the heralds cried,  
“ Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride ; ”

    The people rend the skies with vast applause.  
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cause. 5  
Arcite is own'd e'en by the gods above,  
And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.  
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,  
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevail'd.  
Laugh'd all the powers who favor tyranny 10  
And all the standing army of the sky.  
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,  
And weeping on the lists distill'd her tears ;  
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman most,  
And, in her champion foil'd, the cause of Love is lost. 15  
Till Saturn said, “ Fair daughter, now be still,  
The blust'ring fool has satisfied his will ;  
His boon is given ; his knight has gain'd the day  
But lost the prize, the arrears are yet to pay.  
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be 20  
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free.”

    Now when the heralds run the lists around,  
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth resound ;  
A miracle, (nor less it could be call'd)  
Their joy with unexpected sorrow pall'd. 25  
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,  
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride :  
Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,  
And paid the salutations of the crowd.

Then spurring at full speed, ran endlong on  
Where Theseus sate on his imperial throne;  
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,  
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily;  
Then passing, to the saddle bow he bent: 5  
A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent;  
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,  
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way:)  
Just then, from earth sprung out a flashing fire,  
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire: 10  
The startling steed was seiz'd with sudden fright,  
And, bounding o'er the pommel cast the knight:  
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,  
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.  
Black was his countenance in a little space, 15  
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.  
Help was at hand: they rear'd him from the ground,  
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;  
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;  
It came, but clogg'd with symptoms of his death. 20  
The saddle bow the noble parts had prest,  
All bruise'd and mortified his manly breast.  
Him still entranced, and in a litter laid,  
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.  
At length he waked, and with a feeble cry, 25  
The word he first pronounced, was — "Emily!"

Mean time the king, though inwardly he mourned,  
In pomp triumphant to the town returned,  
Attended by the chiefs, who fought the field;



(Now friendly mixed, and in one troop compelled) :  
Composed his looks to counterfeited cheer,  
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.  
But that which gladdened all the warrior train,  
Though most were sorely wounded, none were slain. 5  
The surgeons soon despoiled 'em of their arms,  
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms ;  
Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,  
And heal their inward hurts with sovereign draughts of  
sage.

The king in person visits all around, 10  
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound ;  
Honors the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,  
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.  
None was disgraced ; for falling is no shame ;  
And cowardice alone is loss of fame. 15  
The vent'rous knight is from his saddle thrown,  
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own ;  
If crowds and palms the conquering side adorn.  
The victor under better stars was born :  
The brave man seeks not popular applause, 20  
Nor overpowered with arms deserts his cause ;  
Unshamed though foiled, he does the best he can  
Force is of brutes, but honor is of man.

Thus Theseus smiled on all with equal grace,  
And each was set according to his place ; 25  
With ease were reconciled the differing parts,  
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.  
At length they took their leave, the time expired ;

Well pleased, and to their several homes retired.

Meanwhile the health of Arcite still impairs ;  
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leeches' cares ;  
Swollen is his breast ; his inward pains increase,  
All means are used, and all without success. 5

The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,  
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art :  
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping will prevail ;  
All outward remedies and inward fail :

The mould of nature's fabric is destroyed, 10  
Her vessels discomposed, her virtue void :  
The bellows of his lungs begin to swell :

All out of frame is every secret cell,  
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.  
Those breathing organs, thus within oppressed, 15  
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.

Nought profits him to save abandoned life,  
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.  
The midmost region battered and destroyed,  
When nature cannot work, the effect of art is void, 20

For physic can but mend our crazy state,  
Patch an old building, not a new create.

Arcite is doomed to die in all his pride,  
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,  
Gained hardly, against right, and unenjoyed. 25

When 'twas declared all hope of life was past,  
Conscience (that of all physic works the last)  
Caused him to send for Emily in haste.

With her, at his desire, came Palamon ;

Then on his pillow raised, he thus begun.  
"No language can express the smallest part  
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,  
For you, whom best I love and value most;  
But to your service I bequeath my ghost; 5  
Which from this mortal body when untied,  
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;  
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,  
But wait officious, and your steps attend :  
How I have loved, excuse my faltering tongue, 10  
My spirit's feeble, and my pains are strong :  
This I may say, I only grieve to die,  
Because I lose my charming Emily :  
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power,  
Fate could not choose a more malicious hour ! 15  
What greater curse could envious Fortune give,  
Than just to die when I began to live !  
Vain men, how vanishing a bliss we crave,  
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave !  
Never, oh, never more to see the sun ! 20  
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone !  
This fate is common ; but I lose my breath  
Near bliss, and yet not blessed before my death.  
Farewell ; but take me dying in your arms,  
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms : 25  
This hand I cannot but in death resign ;  
Ah ! could I live ! but while I live 'tis mine.  
I feel my end approach, and thus embraced,  
Am pleased to die ; but hear me speak my last :

Ah ! my sweet foe, for you, and you alone,  
I broke my faith with injured Palamon.  
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds,  
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.  
And much I doubt, should Heaven my life prolong, 5  
I should return to justify my wrong :  
For while my former flames remain within,  
Repentance is but want of power to sin.  
With mortal hatred I pursued his life,  
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife ; 10  
Nor I, but as I loved ; yet all combined,  
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind ;  
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire ;  
For still our kindred souls had one desire.  
He had a moment's right in point of time ; 15  
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.  
Fate made it mine, and justified his right ;  
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight,  
For virtue, valor, and for noble blood,  
Truth, honor, all that is comprised in good : 20  
So help me Heaven, in all the world is none  
So worthy to be loved as Palamon.  
He loves you too, with such an holy fire,  
As will not, cannot, but with life expire :  
Our vowed affections both have often tried, 25  
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.  
Then, by my love's inviolable band,  
By my long suffering, and my short command,  
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,



Have pity on the faithful Palamon."

This was his last; for Death came on amain,  
And exercised below his iron reign;  
Then upward to the seat of life he goes:  
Sense fled before him, what he touched he froze: 5  
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,  
Though less and less of Emily he saw;  
So, speechless for a little space he lay;  
Then grasped the hand he held, and sighed his soul away.

But whither went his soul, let such relate 10  
Who search the secrets of the future state:  
Divines can say but what themselves believe;  
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative:  
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,  
And faith itself be lost in certainty. 15  
To live uprightly then is sure the best,  
To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.  
The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,  
Who better live than we, though less they know.

In Palamon a manly grief appears; 20  
Silent, he wept, asham'd to show his tears:  
Emilia shriek'd but once, and then, oppress'd  
With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast:  
Till Theseus in his arms convey'd with care,  
Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair. 25  
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;  
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,  
When just approaching to the nuptial state.  
But like a low-hung cloud it rains so fast,



That all at once it falls, and cannot last.  
The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,  
That laugh'd so late, becomes the scene of woe:  
Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,  
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate. 5  
Nor greater grief in falling Troy was seen  
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.  
Old men with dust deform'd their hoary hair,  
The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tear.  
"Why wouldst thou go," with one consent they cry, 10  
"When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily?"

Theseus himself, who should have cheer'd the grief  
Of others, wanted now the same relief;  
Old Egeus only could revive his son,  
Who various changes of the world had known, 15  
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,  
Still altering, never in a steady state;  
Good after ill, and, after pain, delight;  
Alternate like the scenes of day and night:  
"Since every man, who lives, is born to die, 20  
And none can boast sincere felicity,  
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,  
Nor joy, nor grieve, too much for things beyond our care.  
Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;  
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end. 25  
E'en kings but play; and when their part is done,  
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne."  
With words like these the crowd was satisfied,  
And so they would have been, had Theseus died.

But he, their king, was laboring in his mind,  
A fitting place for funeral poms to find,  
Which were in honor of the dead design'd,  
And after long debate, at last he found  
(As love itself had mark'd the spot of ground) 5  
That grove, for ever green, that conscious land,  
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand :  
That where he fed his amorous desires  
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,  
There other flames might waste his earthly part. 10  
And burn his limbs, where love had burn'd his heart.

This once resolv'd, the peasants were enjoin'd  
Sere-wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find.  
With sounding axes to the grove they go,  
Fell, split, and lay the fuel on a row, 15  
Vulcanian food : a bier is next prepar'd,  
On which the lifeless body should be rear'd,  
Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid  
The corpse of Arcite, in like robes array'd.  
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head 20  
A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle, spread.  
A sword keen-edg'd within his right he held,  
The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field :  
Bare was his manly visage on the bier :  
Menac'd his countenance; e'en in death severe. 25  
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,  
To lie in solemn state, a public sight.  
Groans, cries, and howlings fill the crowded place,  
And unaffected sorrow sat on every face.

Sad Palamon above the rest appears,  
In sable garments, dewed with gushing tears :  
His auburn locks on either shoulder flowed,  
Which to the funeral of his friend he vowed :  
But Emily, as chief, was next his side, 5  
A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.  
And that the princely obsequies might be  
Performed according to his high degree,  
The steed, that bore him living to the fight,  
Was trapped with polished steel, all shining bright, 10  
And covered with the achievements of the knight.  
The riders rode abreast, and one his shield,  
His lance of cornel-wood another held ;  
The third his bow, and, glorious to behold,  
The costly quiver, all of burnished gold. 15  
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,  
And, weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier ;  
With sober pace they marched, and often stayed,  
And through the master-street the corpse conveyed.  
The houses to their tops with black were spread, 20  
And even the pavements were with mourning hid.  
The right side of the pall old Egeus kept,  
And on the left the royal Theseus wept ;  
Each bore a golden bowl, of work divine,  
With honey filled, and milk, and mixed with ruddy  
wine. 25  
Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,  
And after him appeared the illustrious train.  
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,

With covered fire, the funeral pile to light.  
With high devotion was the service made,  
And all the rites of pagan honor paid :  
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,  
With vigor drawn, must send the shaft below. · 5  
The bottom was full twenty fathoms broad,  
With crackling straw beneath in due proportion strowed.  
The fabric seemed a wood of rising green,  
With sulphur and bitumen cast between,  
To feed the flames : the trees were unctuous fir, 10  
And mountain-ash, the mother of the spear ;  
The mourner yew, and builder oak were there :  
The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,  
Hard box, and linden of the softer grain,  
And laurels, which the gods for conquering chiefs or-  
dain. 15  
How they were ranked, shall rest untold by me,  
With nameless Nymphs that lived in every tree ;  
Nor how the Dryads, or the woodland train,  
Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain :  
Nor how the birds to foreign seats repaired, 20  
Or beasts, that bolted out, and saw the forest bared :  
Nor how the ground, now cleared, with ghastly fright  
Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.

The straw, as first I said, was laid below :  
Of chips and sere-wood was the second row ; 25  
The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd ;  
The fourth high stage the fragrant odors held,  
And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array,



In midst of which, embalmed the body lay.  
The service sung, the maid with mourning eyes  
The stubble fired; the smouldering flames arise:  
This office done, she sunk upon the ground;  
But what she spoke, recover'd from her swoond, 5  
I want the wit in moving words to dress;  
But by themselves the tender sex may guess.  
While the devouring fire was burning fast,  
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;  
And some their shields, and some their lances threw, 10  
And gave their warrior's ghost a warrior's due.  
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood,  
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,  
And hissing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.  
Then thrice the mounted squadron ride around 15  
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice resound:  
"Hail! and farewell!" they shouted thrice amain,  
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:  
Still as they turn'd, they beat their clattering shields;  
The women mix their cries; and clamor fills the fields.  
The warlike wakes continued all the night, 21  
And funeral games were play'd at new returning light:  
Who naked wrestled best, besmear'd with oil,  
Or who the gauntlets gave or took the foil,  
I will not tell you, nor would you attend; 25  
But briefly haste to my long story's end.

I pass the rest; the year was fully mourn'd,  
And Palamon long since to Thebes return'd:  
When by the Grecians' general consent,



At Athens Theseus held his parliament:  
Among the laws that pass'd, it was decreed,  
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage should be freed;  
Reserving homage to the Athenian throne,  
To which the sovereign summon'd Palamon. 5  
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,  
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and, placed on high,  
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily:  
So call'd, she came; the senate rose, and paid 10  
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.  
And first, soft whispers through the assembly went:  
With silent wonder then they watch'd the event:  
All hush'd, the king arose with awful grace,  
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face.  
At length he sigh'd; and having first prepar'd 15  
The attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.

“The Cause and Spring of motion, from above,  
Hung down on earth the golden chain of Love:  
Great was the effect, and high was his intent, 20  
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent.  
Fire, flood, and earth, and air by this were bound,  
And Love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.  
The chain still holds; for though the forms decay,  
Eternal matter never wears away: 25  
The same first Mover certain bounds has plac'd,  
How long those perishable forms shall last;  
Nor can they last beyond the time assign'd  
By that all-seeing, and all-making mind:

Shorten their hours they may ; for will is free ;  
But never pass the appointed destiny.  
To men oppress'd, when weary of their breath,  
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.  
Then since those forms begin, and have their end, 5  
On some unalter'd cause they sure depend :  
Parts of the whole are we ; but God the whole,  
Who gives us life, and animating soul.  
For nature cannot from a part derive  
That being, which the whole can only give : 10  
He perfect, stable ; but imperfect we,  
Subject to change, and different in degree ;  
Plants, beasts, and man ; and as our organs are,  
We more or less of his perfection share.  
But by a long descent, the ethereal fire 15  
Corrupts : and forms, the mortal part, expire :  
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,  
And the same matter makes another mass :  
This law the Omniscient Power was pleas'd to give,  
That every kind should by succession live : 20  
That individuals die, his will ordains ;  
The propagated species still remains.  
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,  
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees ;  
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays, 25  
Supreme in state, and in three more decays ;  
So wears the paving pebble in the street,  
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet :  
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,

Forsaken of their springs ; and leave their channels dry.  
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,  
Then, form'd, the little heart begins to beat ;  
Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell ;  
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell, 5  
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid ;  
Then, helpless, in his mother's lap is laid.  
He creeps, he walks, and issuing into man,  
Grudges their life, from whence his own began :  
Reckless of laws, affects to rule alone, 10  
Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne :  
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last ;  
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.  
Some thus ; but thousands more in flower of age :  
For few arrive to run the latter stage. 15  
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,  
And others whelm'd beneath the stormy main.  
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,  
At whose command we perish, and we spring ?  
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordain'd to die, 20  
To make a virtue of necessity.  
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain ;  
The bad grows better, which we well sustain ;  
And could we choose the time, and choose aright,  
'Tis best to die, our honor at the height. 25  
When we have done our ancestors no shame,  
But serv'd our friends, and well secur'd our fame  
Then should we wish our happy life to close,  
And leave no more for fortune to dispose :

So should we make our death a glad relief  
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief :  
Enjoying while we live the present hour,  
And dying in our excellence and flower.  
Then round our death-bed every friend should run, 5  
And joyous of our conquest early won :  
While the malicious world with envious tears  
Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.  
Since then our Arcite is with honor dead,  
Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed, 10  
Or call untimely, what the gods decreed ?  
With grief as just, a friend may be deplor'd,  
From a foul prison to free air restor'd.  
Ought he to thank his kinsman or his wife,  
Could tears recall him into wretched life ? 15  
Their sorrow hurts themselves ; on him is lost ;  
And worse than both, offends his happy ghost.  
What then remains, but, after past annoy,  
To take the good vicissitude of joy ?  
To thank the gracious gods for what they give, 20  
Possess our souls, and while we live, to live ?  
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,  
And in one point the extremes of grief to join ;  
That thence resulting joy may be renewed,  
As jarring notes in harmony conclude. 25  
Then I propose that Palamon shall be  
In marriage joined with beauteous Emily ;  
For which already I have gained the assent  
Of my free people in full parliament.

Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,  
And well deserved, had Fortune done him right :  
'Tis time to mend her fault ; since Emily  
By Arcite's death from former vows is free :

If you, fair sister, ratify the accord,  
And take him for your husband, and your lord,  
'Tis no dishonor to confer your grace  
On one descended from a royal race :

And were he less, yet years of service past  
From grateful souls exact reward at last ;  
Pity is Heaven's and yours ; nor can she find  
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind."

He said ; she blushed ; and as o'erawed by might,  
Seemed to give Theseus what she gave the knight.  
Then turning to the Theban thus he said :

"Small arguments are needful to persuade  
Your temper to comply with my command."  
And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.  
Smiled Venus, to behold her own true knight  
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight.

All of a tenor was their after-life,  
No day discolored with domestic strife ;  
No jealousy, but mutual truth believed,  
Secure repose, and kindness undeceived.  
Thus Heaven, beyond the compass of his thought,  
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.

So may the Queen of Love long duty bless,  
And all true lovers find the same success.



## NOTES.

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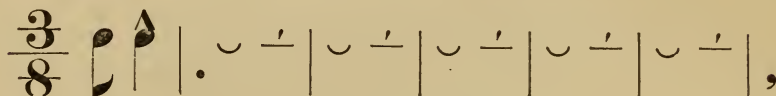
### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN preparing the notes, care has been taken to give explanations necessary to the interpretation of thought, without doing too much. Excessive editing is an impertinence to the author, and a detriment to the reader. This poem forms a valuable means of gaining or refreshing acquaintance with classical lore; and were all allusions, perhaps unfamiliar to many, explained in the notes, it would be necessary to subjoin a mythological glossary of considerable length, a not only useless, but pernicious task. This selection should be studied only in connection with the proper books of reference, including first of all a good classical dictionary; and were there such fulness of notes as to lead the student to think that he could dispense with other aids, a wrong would be done.

In class-work the accompanying outline, with such amplification as time admits of or inclination suggests, can be followed to advantage.

STRUCTURE OF THE POEM.—As the metrical explanation given by the editor in his notes to Goldsmith's *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* has proved beneficial to so many, it is largely repeated here, the verse being the same. This poem, like so many others of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is written in iambic pentameter, often called *heroic verse*, a metrical form which is to the English, German, and Italian languages what the hexameter is to Greek and Latin. Ruskin says: "The tetrameter and pentameter, which require the full breath but do not exhaust it, constitute the entire body of the chief poetry of energetic nations; the hexameter,

which fully exhausts the breath, is only used by nations whose pleasure was in repose." Iambic pentameter is scanned thus:—



"God gíves | us || whát | he knóws | our wánts | requíre,

And bét | ter thíngs || than thóse | which wé | desíre."

*Palamon and Arcite.*

"Like píl | grims || tó | the appóint | ed pláce | we teínd ;

The world's | an inn, || and death | the jour | ney's end."

*Ibid.*

The cæsura, or natural pause in reading, indicated thus ||, which is needed in most lines longer than the tetrameter verse, may in this form come anywhere in the line, but is found most frequently after the fourth or sixth syllable.

The lines are arranged in rhymed couplets, a system largely built up by Dryden, and fully developed in the polished work of Pope, who "bound verse in a ten-linked chain whose chief music lay in the exquisite tinklings of the ends." The rules governing this were that there should be a pause, a comma at least, at the end of every couplet, and no sentence should close except with the end of a line. An extra syllable was guarded against. Dryden does not always observe these last points, and his action in this respect seems to us a merit rather than a fault. He also uses many triple rhymes. Heroic couplets lend themselves readily to quotation, and hence live in our speech; but the artificial nature of the whole arrangement caused poets later on to turn to more varying and less mechanical forms.

THE DEDICATION. — The long dedication is to be noticed as representing a custom of the times, continuing with lessening frequency until near the close of the last century. Such addresses were regularly in an effusively complimentary strain, and Dryden surpasses most others in the extravagance of his adulation. Much disgust has been expressed at such obsequiousness, but it does not argue the meanness of character that might be inferred. In those times of

limited circulation, there was no such thing as literary independence for a struggling author. Patrons were necessary and had to be cultivated, often being addressed as "Mæcenas" or "Tibullus," in allusion to the patrons of classic writers. Dryden seems to have regarded his fulsome expressions as a necessary part of literary etiquette, and also, no doubt, as necessary for more material reasons. Each noble personage thus honored was expected to respond with a liberal donation, a welcome boon to a needy author.

The Duchess of Ormond was the beautiful Lady Mary Somerset, second daughter of Henry, Duke of Beaufort. She was the second wife of the Duke of Ormond, a liberal patron of Dryden, and the one to whom the collection called the *Fables*, in which this poem appears, was dedicated.

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## OUTLINE OF THE POEM

### BOOK I.

#### PAGE. LINE.

- 47. 1. **Theseus**, king of Athens, and his victories.
- 48. 16. **Plea** of the Theban matrons.
- 50. 17. **Compassion** of Theseus, and conquest of Thebes.
- 52. 7. **Capture** of the cousins, Palamon and Arcite.
- 53. 6. **Description** of Emily, sister-in-law of Theseus.
- 54. 17. **Palamon's** infatuation.
- 56. 4. **Avowal** of his passion to Arcite.
- 56. 23. **Arcite's** kindled love for Emily.
- 57. 6. **Quarrel** of the cousins.
- 59. 24. **Visit** of Pirithous, and release of Arcite.
- 60. 16. **Comparison** of Arcite's lot with that of Palamon.
- 65. 10. **Despair** of Arcite.
- 66. 6. **His dream** and resolve.
- 67. 15. **His prosperity** in disguise at Athens.

### BOOK II.

- 69. 1. **Palamon's** escape and purpose.
- 72. 9. **Arcite's** **plaint**, overheard by Palamon.
- 73. 12. **Disclosure** of Palamon, and arrangement of the duel.

- 75. 24. **The fight**, and its interruption by Theseus.
- 79. 20. **Condemnation** of the combatants, and plea for their  
lives by sympathetic Hippolita and her ladies.
- 80. 17. **Relenting** of Theseus.
- 83. 7. **The terms** of freedom for the cousins.
- 84. 11. **Description** of the lists prepared by Theseus.

## BOOK III.

- 93. 1. **The general enthusiasm** over the approaching contest.
- 93. 22. **Palamon's** knightly retinue.
- 95. 10. **Arcite's** champions.
- 96. 21. **Welcome** of the rival trains at Athens.
- 97. 12. **Palamon's** favorably received prayer to Venus.
- 99. 20. **Emily's** rites to Diana, and revelation of the will of  
Jupiter by the goddess.
- 103. 9. **Arcite's** successful appeal to Mars.
- 106. 1. **Saturn's** offices as peacemaker between the patron dei-  
ties.
- 107. 25. **Preliminaries** of the contest.
- 113. 5. **The passage-at-arms**, and victory as promised by Mars.
- 116. 12. **Anxiety** of Venus, and Saturn's consolation.
- 116. 22. **The fatal mishap** of Arcite in the moment of triumph.
- 117. 28. **The king's** care for the contestants.
- 119. 2. **Dying speech** of Arcite.
- 124. 1. **Funeral rites** for the dead hero.
- 128. 8. **Address** of Theseus after the year of mourning.
- 131. 26. **Bestowal** of Emily upon Palamon, thus redeeming the  
pledge of Venus.

## BOOK I.

Page 47, line 2. **Theseus**. This great legendary hero of Attica is the subject of Boccaccio's poem, named after him, the *Teseide*. Also the hero of the story of Ariadne, told in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. After abandoning Ariadne, he succeeded his father Ægeus as king of Athens, and conquered Amazonia (Women's Land), whence



he bore in triumph the queen of the Amazons, Antiope, here called Hippolita.

P. 47, l. 3. **Chief.** What is the construction of this word in its sentence?

P. 47, l. 11. **Sixty-seven triplets**, of which we here have the first instance, are found in this poem. Their use no doubt made the poet's work easier, but they mar the melody; and often, as here, the third line might better be dropped. Swift called the triplet "a vicious way of rhyming wherewith Mr. Dryden abounded, imitated by all the bad versifiers of Charles the Second's court." Triple rhymes were formerly printed with a brace at the margin, it being thought, as Dr. Johnson says, that without this warning the reader would not be able to accommodate his voice to the change.

P. 48, l. 3. **The spousals of Hippolita.** Cf. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which tells of a frolic for this occasion.

P. 48, l. 11. **Accidents.** In the original meaning of befallings or occurrences. Latin, *accidere*, to happen. We should now say "incidents," from a kindred derivation.

P. 48, l. 14. **He whose tale is best.** As has been said, this is a revision of one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In these, twenty-nine persons, forming an epitome of society by their different stations in life, are making a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket (what is the story of Becket?) in Canterbury. On their way they stop at the Tabard Inn, Southwark, and the genial host proposes to accompany them as guide. He suggests that to shorten the way each one shall tell two tales both going and returning. Any one disputing the judgment of the host as master of ceremonies was to pay all expenses of the journey; and the one pleasing most was to have a supper at the common cost at the Tabard on their return, hence the allusion here. When lots were drawn for the first tale, the short "cut" fell to the Knight, who, as the most dignified member of the party, is very properly made to tell this noble tale of chivalry. Only twenty-four of the projected tales were completed by Chaucer.

P. 49, l. 3. **Weeds.** Garments in general, and not restricted in meaning as with us. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act IV., Sc. and Milton's *L'Allegro*:—

"Where throngs of knights and bold,  
In weeds of peace, high triumph hold."



P. 50, l. 1. **The fatal day.** The time of "The Seven against Thebes," of whom Capaneus was one. See classical dictionary for this, and other such allusions as they occur.

P. 50, l. 18. **As** = as if, or as though, by an old poetic use.

"He lies as he his bliss did know."

WALLER.

P. 50, l. 22. **Crew** = company.

"Mirth, admit me of thy crew."

MILTON.

P. 50, l. 24. **The faith which knights, etc.** What was the oath of knighthood?

P. 51, l. 3. **Banner.** A square flag which only nobles of great power and lineage had a right to display.

P. 51, l. 4. **Field.** A term used in heraldry for the ground upon which the charges, as the symbolic designs were called, were displayed. Notice that Mars in his war-chariot was pictured upon the banner. Meaning of **argent**? What terms were used for the various colors of heraldry?

P. 51, l. 10. **Pennon.** A flag or streamer forked like the swallow's wing, pennon = pinion, and borne by any knight. Often affixed to a lance, as here.

P. 51, l. 27. **Howling.** An undignified term, however correctly expressive. The power of diction may be shown by noticing how much more harmonious "wailing" would be in place of the word used.

P. 51, l. 29. **Dames.** Construction of this word?

P. 52, l. 14. **Surcoats.** Garments for the body worn above the armor for protection against the weather. The 'sweater' of the modern athlete suggests them. From the custom of emblazoning the family arms upon the breasts of these comes the term coat-of-arms.

P. 52, l. 21. **Arcite.** To be pronounced either Är-sīt' or Är'-sīt, as the metre may require.

P. 53, l. 15. **The vigils of her night.** "Against Maie, every parish, towne, and village, assembled themselves together, bothe men, women, and children, olde and yonge, even all indifferently, and either going all together, or devidyng themselves into companies,

they goe, some to the woodes and groves, some to the hills and mountaines, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all night in pastimes; in the morninge they return, bringing with them birch, bowes and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withalle."

— *Anatomy of Abuses*, STUBBES.

"To do observance to a morn of May."

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I., Sc. i.

Also cf. l. 20, p. 70, of this poem.

P. 53, l. 20. **Fair.** What does this word modify?

P. 54, l. 9. **Philomel.** Poetic term for the nightingale.

"'Less Philomel will deign a song."

*Il Penseroso*, MILTON.

P. 54, l. 18. **Of woe** = by means of woe. "Of" was formerly used to express both means and agency.

P. 55, l. 11. **Gave a scanty light.** How does this compare in sense with our ordinary expression "gave light"?

P. 55, l. 26. **Horoscope.** The casting of horoscopes, that is the observing of the relative position of heavenly bodies at the moment of a child's birth, in order to determine the events of his life, was common until comparatively modern times, and is not unknown now. Dryden was a firm believer in astrology, and often employed it.

P. 58, l. 15. **I saw the woman.** Notice the force of this. The thought is "I loved a *woman*, where you but worshipped a goddess." Cf. the line from Whittier's "*Nauhaught, the Deacon*":—

"I saw the angel where they see a man."

P. 58, l. 21. **No law is made for love.** In the *Knight's Tale* Arcite asks of Palamon:—

"Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes saw,  
That 'who shall yeve a lover any lawe'?"

The "olde clerke" is Boethius, from whose book, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, Chaucer often borrows. The passage referred to is:—

"Quis legem det amantibus?  
Major lex amor est sibi."

Who gives law to lovers?  
Love is a greater law to itself.

- P. 59, l. 11. **A cur.** Chaucer has a "kite" which is far better.  
 P. 59, l. 18. **Great was their strife.** These six lines are entirely Dryden's own.  
 P. 59, l. 29. **When one died.** See account of Theseus.  
 P. 63, l. 4. **Join'd.** *oi* has regularly the sound of *i* in the poetry of this period.  
 P. 64, l. 16. **Thrids.** Threads, makes a winding way.  
 P. 64, l. 21. **Quartile.** An unfavorable position in astrology.  
 P. 65, l. 4. **'Tis hard to say.** Chaucer has here a very effective apostrophe:—

"You lovers axe I now this question,  
 Who hath the werse, Arcite or Palamon?"

- P. 65, l. 7. **Beholds whate'er he would,** etc. This spirited play on words is a conceit of Dryden's. It suggests Ovid.  
 P. 65, l. 17. **He wanted tears.** It is due to Chaucer to say that this curious physiological reasoning belongs wholly to Dryden.  
 P. 66, l. 3. **Trim.** Dress or condition.  
 P. 66, l. 10. **Hermes.** Scott says that the apparition of Hermes is an allegory to show that Arcite employed stratagem.  
 P. 67, l. 7. **A laboring hind.** Peasant or farm-hand. An English use of the word.  
 P. 67, l. 7. **In show.** In appearance.  
 P. 67, l. 24. **Philostratus.** This name was taken from another work by Boccaccio. Skeat, in his notes on Chaucer, says that Boccaccio did not understand the Greek derivation of the word which means "army lover," but took the latter part from the Latin *stratus*, thus making it mean "one prostrated with love," in which sense it is used here.  
 P. 68, l. 13. **In arms of honor,** etc. Equivalent to "honored in war and esteemed in peace."

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## BOOK II.

- P. 69, l. 10. **And May,** etc. When the sun entered the house or sign of the zodiac represented by Gemini or the Twins.  
 P. 70, l. 21. **The month of merry May.** See note on l. 15, p. 53.

The article on May-day customs in Brand's *Popular Antiquities* will be of interest.

P. 71, l. 20. **Fields are full of eyes**, etc. Tyrwhitt here refers to an old monkish verse:—

“Campus habet lumen, et habet nemus auris acumen.”

Each open field hath an eye, and the wood a keen ear possesseth.

Warton quotes from *Ray's Proverbs*, one from the Hebrew to the same effect:—

“Do not speak of great matters in a field that is full of little hills.”

P. 72, l. 2. **As buckets in a well**. “Like so many buckets in a well; as one riseth another falleth, one's empty, another's full.”—*Anatomy of Melancholy*, BURTON.

Also cf. Shakespeare's *Richard II.*, Act IV., Sc. i.

P. 72, l. 3. **Venus like her day**, etc. Friday, taking its name from Freya, the counterpart of Venus in German mythology, was sacred to the goddess of love.

P. 72, l. 8. **Juno's unrelenting hate**.

“Yi superum sāvæ memorem Junonis ob iram.”

*Æneid*, Bk. I.

P. 72, l. 9. **Curs'd be the day**, etc. “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and let it not be joined unto the days of the year. Let it not come into the number of the months. Let them curse it that curse the day.”—*Job* iii. 3.

P. 73, l. 6. **Of such a goddess**, etc. Dryden was usually an imitator or emulator rather than a borrower, but he has taken these two lines bodily from a poem contributed to one of his *Miscellanies* by T. Carew.

P. 74, l. 18. **Arms of proof**. An obsolete expression meaning of tried quality.

P. 75, l. 22. **A generous chillness**. Generous is here used in the sense of stimulating or exalting.

P. 76, l. 1. **They foïn**. Often rendered “fence,” but meaning the thrusting stroke.

“To foyne is better than to smyte.”

*Sports and Pastimes*, STRUTT.

P. 77, l. 8. **The goddess of the silver bow**. Diana.



P. 78, l. 13. **The imprison'd soul.** The conception of the soul as confined within the body is beautifully expressed by Waller:—

“The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lies in new light through chinks that Time has made.”

P. 80, l. 2. **Quire.** Company, the same as *choir*.

P. 80, l. 3. **The contended maid.** The object of contention.

P. 80, l. 21. **Softest minds.** Dryden mistakes the meaning here. The original is:—

“Pity renneth sone in gentel herte.”

That is, in the heart of a gentle, or high-born man.

P. 81, l. 12. **An awful nod.** Cf. the lines from *Alexander's Feast*:—

“Assumes the god,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres.”

DRYDEN.

P. 82, l. 21. **Vassals.** What were the terms of vassalage under the feudal system?

P. 83, l. 12. **To this same point**=in one year from to-day.

P. 83, l. 18. **Bars.** The palisades of the lists or grounds enclosed for tournament. Scott quotes from Sir David Lindsay's treatise on heraldry that once when a challenger in a cause of treason had died before the day of combat, a court of chivalry ordered his dead body to be brought into the lists, completely armed, and adjudged that the defendant should be held conqueror if he could throw it over the bars. But the corpse and arms being weighty, the sun set before he could accomplish this, and he was condemned for treason as conquered in the trial by combat.

P. 84, l. 15. **Lists.** The description is evidently based on those appointed for ordeal combats by Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, uncle to Richard II. These were that the king should find the lists, and the field must be sixty paces long and forty paces broad, the ground within of proper nature and condition, and that the lists must be made with one door to the east and another to the west, and strongly enclosed with good bars seven feet high or more, so that a horse might not be able to leap over them.

P. 85, l. 3. **A glorious theatre.** The general arrangement of this round theatre can easily be grasped. On the north was the



tower of Diana, with an oratory or chapel; on the east the gate of Venus, with altar and oratory above; on the west the gate of Mars, arranged to correspond.

P. 85, l. 26. **Beauty and youth**, etc. In reading these personifications, compare Collins's *Ode to the Passions*.

P. 86, l. 20. **Samson, Solomon**. This incongruous grouping of scriptural characters with those in mythology did not shock the times of Dryden. Chaucer had Hercules instead of Samson.

P. 87, l. 24. **Knares**. Gnarls.

P. 88, l. 3. **Bent**. Curving slope of the mountain. Chaucer wrote "under a bent."

P. 88, l. 4. **Temple**. Notice that this is merely the painting of a temple on one of the walls of the oratory of Mars. It is described as if real, which is confusing.

P. 88, l. 11. **A northern light**. Perhaps Dryden meant the aurora borealis; but the description came to Chaucer from the *Thebaid* of Statius, where it means the cold light reflected through a northern opening (Skeat).

P. 89, l. 23. **All ill of Mars his nature**. The introduction of these ghastly descriptions arises from the confusion of the god of war with the planet bearing his name. This unclassical association of planets and deities must be borne in mind in many places in this poem. The influence of Mars was supposed to produce all the disasters here mentioned, and the belief of those devoted to astrology may be shown by the following from the *Compost* of Ptolemy:—

"Under Mars is borne thieves and robbers that kepe hyeways and do hurte to true men, and nyght-walkers and quarell-pykers, bostirs, mockers, and scoffers, and these men of Mars causeth warre and murder, and batayle."

Notice the "his," a use of the old form of expressing possession, which grew into 's.

P. 90, l. 16. **Geomantic**. Geomancy was a kind of divination by plotting the position of heavenly bodies, first on the ground, whence the name, and afterwards on paper.

P. 90, l. 17. **A warrior and a maid**, etc. The most obvious understanding of this is that in geomancy the representation of Mars direct, or moving from west to east, was called "puella," here rendered "maid;" while that of Mars retrograde, or apparently moving from east to west, was called "rubens," here rendered "warrior."

The correctness of these terms is disputed by scholars, but it is not worth our while to enter into such points.

A powerful image in Chaucer's poem is omitted here:—

“A wolfe ther stode before him at his feet,  
With eyen red, and of a man he ete.”

P. 90, l. 23. **Cynthia.** The same as Diana.

P. 90, l. 25. **Calisto.** What are the stories of Calisto, Actæon, Daphne, and Atalanta?

P. 91, l. 8. **Ænides.** Patronymic of whom?

### BOOK III.

P. 93, l. 19. **To Palamon, etc.** What words are needed to make a complete clause?

P. 94, l. 1. **Their arms.** The accoutrements of knights differed greatly in fashion, and in the single combat it was a matter of great care to see that each warrior was equally armed and protected. In general tournaments, like the one here, however, each knight chose for himself, subject to the regulations of the judges for lessening the danger.

P. 94, l. 8. **Pruce.** Prussia. In keeping with the spirit of anachronism shown throughout. When did Prussia take her place among nations?

P. 96, l. 1. **Intolerable day.** This powerful epithet is used by Goldsmith in describing the sufferings of exiles:—

“Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray  
And fiercely shed intolerable day.”

*The Deserted Village.*

P. 96, l. 19. **So Bacchus, etc.** This simile is Dryden's own. “Honest” is in the sense of the Latin *honestus*, comely.

“Et quocunque Deus circum caput egit honestum.”

*Georgics*, Bk. II.

P. 97, l. 17. **Preventing.** In the literal meaning of the Latin *præ-venire*, to come before.

P. 98, l. 5. **Gladder.** What part of speech?

P. 101, l. 6. **Thy triple shape.** Diana is called *Diva Triformis*; in heaven, Luna and Cynthia; on earth, Diana and Lucina; and in hell, Proserpina.

P. 103, l. 10. **Heptarchy of power.** Seven planets were then known. Observe how readily the astrology in which Chaucer and Dryden both believed mingles with astronomy.

P. 105, l. 22. **This omen pleased.** Chaucer has a pretty simile to describe Arcite's pleasure at the auspicious response:—

“As fayn as foul is of the bright sonne.”

That is, as glad as a bird is at sunshine after storm.

P. 106, l. 14. **Not to be outridden,** etc. A senseless line resulting from a failure to understand a Saxon expression. Chaucer says,—

“Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-rede,”

i.e., men may outrun old age, but not outwit it (surpass its rede or counsel).

P. 106, l. 15. **Trined.** Placed at an angle of one hundred and twenty degrees with Venus, and being in the same house or sign of the Zodiac with Mars, he overpowers the latter's influence by a greater. A favorable position.

P. 107, l. 3. **My star appoints.** The influence of Saturn, according to astrology, was baleful. Cf. our adjective “saturnine.” Another instance of the association of deities with planets.

P. 107, l. 8. **Bought senates,** etc. This line, being a political allusion, is supplied by Dryden.

P. 108, l. 27. **Smiths and armorers.** In 1631 the court of chivalry for judicial combats appointed that until the signal for the fray was given the combatants should have meat and drink, iron nails, file, scissors, bodkin, needle and thread, armorer and tailor, to aid them as need required.

P. 109, l. 19. **Double-biting** = two-edged.

P. 110, l. 22. **Biting.** Sharp.

P. 110, l. 24. **Sharp-grinded.** Past tenses like this, having forms of the weak conjugation where we now use the strong or irregular, are frequently met with in older writings.

P. 110, l. 27. **Mischief.** Disadvantage.

P. 113, l. 12. **A cloud of smoke.** A fine passage of ten lines

here is Dryden's own, and is one of the places where he improves upon the original by the expansion of the theme.

P. 114, l. 19. **The jealous blows.** Zealous, passionately delivered.

P. 115, l. 9. **He struck**, i.e., Emetrius struck Palamon.

P. 116, l. 10. **The powers who favor tyranny.** Another political sarcasm introduced by Dryden, and aimed at the Whig party.

P. 117, l. 9. **A flashing fire.** The best readings of Chaucer have here "an infernal fury."

P. 119, l. 16. **Venom.** One early writer says, "Also when bloude rotteth in anye member, but it be taken out by skill or kinde, it turneth into venime."

P. 120, l. 2. **No language can express**, etc. The dying speech of Arcite is worthy the most careful attention for its pathos, rendered the more effective by rugged manliness. The character of it is readily observed to be thoroughly British in its candor, and well suits Dryden's own nature.

P. 122, l. 10. **But whither went his soul.** Boccaccio described the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven, but Chaucer had already borrowed this, and applied it to the hero of his *Troilus*. Hence this ingenious way of disposing of the matter.

P. 123, l. 7. **Hector was not then.** A weak, blindly expressed conclusion, showing how hard pressed even great poets sometimes become.

P. 124, l. 6. **Land.** Scott's edition reads "lawnd," from the French *launde*, a wild, uncultivated meadow or glade, giving rise to our *lawn* with its more limited meaning.

P. 124, l. 20. **White gloves** were used as mourning at the funeral of an unmarried person.

P. 125, l. 9. **The steed.** The impressive feature of a fully caparisoned riderless horse at the funeral of an officer of high rank has come down from this custom of chivalry.

P. 125, l. 12. **The riders.** In old English funerals, if the deceased were a knight, his helmet, shield, sword, and coat-armor were each carried by some near kinsman or by a herald in his blazoned costume.

P. 126, l. 10. **The trees.** This list of trees for the wood of the funeral-pyre is paralleled by many ancient writers, as Ovid, Virgil, Lucan, etc.



P. 127, l. 17. **Hail and farewell.** Cf. the *Æneid* for instances of calling the shades at interments.

P. 127, l. 21. **The warlike wakes.** Tyrwhitt remarks that Chaucer seems to have confounded the wake-plays of his own time with the funeral games of the ancients. Cf. the *Æneid*, Bks. V. and XI., for accounts of funeral games.

P. 130, l. 21. **To make a virtue of necessity.** This familiar quotation is borrowed by Chaucer from *Le Roman de la Rose*, —

“S’il ne fait de nécessité  
Vertu.”

P. 132, l. 21. The beautiful conclusion of the *Knights Tale*, as told by Chaucer, will serve to illustrate the original of this poem: —

“For now is Palamon in alle wele,  
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele:  
And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,  
And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,  
That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene  
Of jelousye, or any other tene.  
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;  
And God save al this faire compaignye!”





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